



This is a digital copy of a book that was preserved for generations on library shelves before it was carefully scanned by Google as part of a project to make the world's books discoverable online.

It has survived long enough for the copyright to expire and the book to enter the public domain. A public domain book is one that was never subject to copyright or whose legal copyright term has expired. Whether a book is in the public domain may vary country to country. Public domain books are our gateways to the past, representing a wealth of history, culture and knowledge that's often difficult to discover.

Marks, notations and other marginalia present in the original volume will appear in this file - a reminder of this book's long journey from the publisher to a library and finally to you.

Usage guidelines

Google is proud to partner with libraries to digitize public domain materials and make them widely accessible. Public domain books belong to the public and we are merely their custodians. Nevertheless, this work is expensive, so in order to keep providing this resource, we have taken steps to prevent abuse by commercial parties, including placing technical restrictions on automated querying.

We also ask that you:

- + *Make non-commercial use of the files* We designed Google Book Search for use by individuals, and we request that you use these files for personal, non-commercial purposes.
- + *Refrain from automated querying* Do not send automated queries of any sort to Google's system: If you are conducting research on machine translation, optical character recognition or other areas where access to a large amount of text is helpful, please contact us. We encourage the use of public domain materials for these purposes and may be able to help.
- + *Maintain attribution* The Google "watermark" you see on each file is essential for informing people about this project and helping them find additional materials through Google Book Search. Please do not remove it.
- + *Keep it legal* Whatever your use, remember that you are responsible for ensuring that what you are doing is legal. Do not assume that just because we believe a book is in the public domain for users in the United States, that the work is also in the public domain for users in other countries. Whether a book is still in copyright varies from country to country, and we can't offer guidance on whether any specific use of any specific book is allowed. Please do not assume that a book's appearance in Google Book Search means it can be used in any manner anywhere in the world. Copyright infringement liability can be quite severe.

About Google Book Search

Google's mission is to organize the world's information and to make it universally accessible and useful. Google Book Search helps readers discover the world's books while helping authors and publishers reach new audiences. You can search through the full text of this book on the web at <http://books.google.com/>

C
8347
489.17

Some Memoirs of the Life of John Roberts
1859

. 487.17

Harvard College Library



**BOUGHT FROM THE
ANDREW PRESTON PEABODY
FUND**



**BEQUEATHED BY
CAROLINE EUSTIS PEABODY
OF CAMBRIDGE**



id B
SOME MEMOIRS

OF THE

LIFE OF JOHN ROBERTS,

ONE OF THE EARLY FRIENDS,

WRITTEN BY HIS SON, DANIEL ROBERTS,

IN 1725.

A New Edition,

**CAREFULLY COMPARED WITH THE ORIGINAL MANUSCRIPT;
AND SOME LETTERS AND EXPLANATORY NOTES
ADDED BY HIS DESCENDANT,**

DAVID ROBERTS.

LONDON:

A. W. BENNETT, 5, BISHOPSGATE WITHOUT.

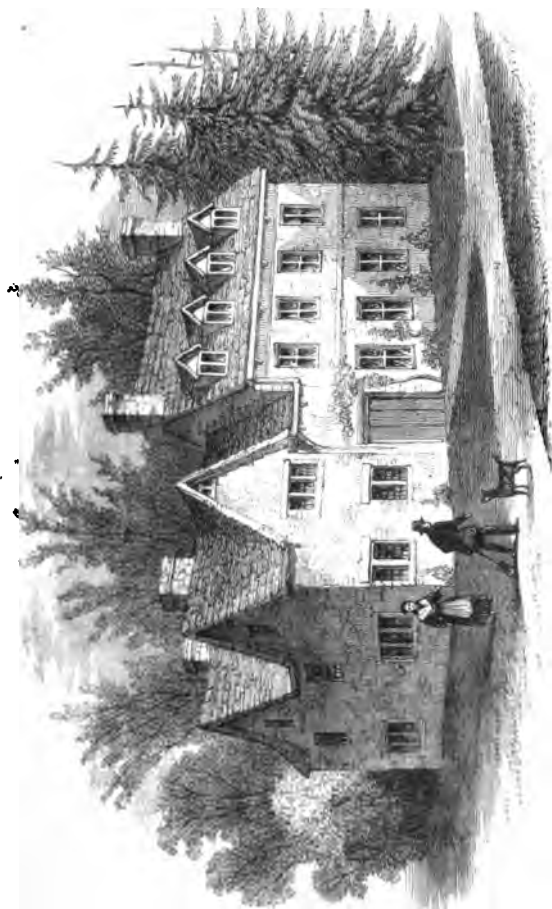
1859.

C 8347.489.17

✓

HARVARD COLLEGE LIBRARY
FROM THE
ANDREW PRESTON PEABODY
FUND

February 3, 1942



JOHN ROBERTS'S HOUSE AT SIDDINGTON.



P R E F A C E.

IN bringing before the notice of the Public another edition of these Memoirs, I wish to state the circumstances that have induced me to undertake to do it.

The Memoirs as originally written by his son, Daniel Roberts, in 1725, and for some years circulated in the family and amongst friends in *manuscript*, were first *printed* without the concurrence of the family of the writer, and some passages altered, and others omitted. A few years since a manuscript copy, in the handwriting of my late relative, Oade Roberts, a lineal descendant of John Roberts, was placed in my hands by one of the family, with the request that if another edition should be called for, I would bring it forward. The following short preface was affixed to this manuscript:—

“A new impression of the following pages having been called for, the present editor has taken the opportunity of revising with the *original*

some inaccurate extracts contained in former editions, all of which were published without the concurrence of the family interested. Several omitted passages and letters have been also restored from the same authority, which will render the whole a more regular and connected narrative."

The notes are in the manuscript prepared by Oade Roberts, with the exception of the extracts from "Besse's Sufferings of Friends," and the notices of Bishops Nicholson and Bull, which I have inserted, believing that some account of them would be interesting to the readers of these Memoirs.

I have also added the Testimony of Upper-Side Monthly Meeting of Friends respecting Daniel Roberts, showing that *he* was a man in good esteem amongst his friends.

J. T.

Hitchin, 5th month, 1859.

MEMOIRS,

&c., &c.

I HAVE had it on my mind, for some years past, to commit to writing several memorable occurrences, the chief of which passed within my remembrance, together with a short account of the family.

My grandfather's name was John Roberts. He resided at the village of Siddington, about a mile from Cirencester, in Gloucestershire, where I have heard that he occupied, in good reputation, a small estate of his own. He married Mary Solliss, sister to Andrew Solliss, a magistrate of the same vicinity. During the wars between Charles I. and the Parliament he sustained great spoil; for I have been informed that a colonel, with his company, quartered themselves upon him for a considerable time together, plundering the premises, and turning their horses to the produce of the farm.

On the breaking out of the troubles in 1642, my father and his next neighbour joined the standard of the Commonwealth, till having heard that

Cirencester was taken by the royalists under prince Rupert,* (1642-3,) they both resolved to return, to see how it fared with their friends and families. As they were passing by the town's end, which they had hoped to do undiscovered, it happened that they were seen and pursued by two soldiers of the king's party, then in possession of the place. On this they quitted their horses and retreated across the fields, but, encumbered with their accoutrements, could make little speed. The pursuers came up with my father first, and, though he asked for quarter, none would they give him, but persisted in slashing his hands and arms, with which he endeavoured to save his head. At length he fell on his face, when the soldiers, who were on horseback, cried to each other, "Alight, and cut his throat!" but neither of them did, though they proceeded to strike and wound him about the neck, till they thought him dead. They then quitted him, and pursued his neighbour, whom they presently overtook and killed. Soon after they had left my father, it was said in his heart, "Arise, and flee for thy life;" which call he obeyed, and starting upon

* The town was subsequently occupied by either party, as circumstances occurred; and, on the king's raising the siege of Gloucester, at the approach of the earl of Essex, in the autumn of 1643, the latter expelled a royal garrison of two regiments. Being pretty large, and considered the key of Gloucestershire, it had been fortified with some diligence.

his feet, his enemies espied him in motion, and again followed him. He ran down a hill, and through a river at the bottom of it, though with great difficulty, his boots filling with water, and his wounds bleeding very much. The soldiers gained the top of the hill, but ceased the pursuit on finding that he had got over. He was at a loss what course to take in this wounded and disconsolate situation, being surrounded with enemies on every hand. At length he determined to proceed to his uncle Solliss's, about half a mile farther, whence he despatched a servant to a widow at Cirencester, with whom he was acquainted, and at whose house the chief officers lay, desiring her to come to him. She readily did so, and offered him any services in her power. On this he requested that she would use her interest on his account with her guests, that none of the soldiers might be permitted to offer him any insult. This she effected, and in good will to her they likewise sent him their ablest surgeon. He was a man of great skill, but of a sour disposition; for he told my father that if he had met with him in the fields he would have killed him himself; "but now," says he, "I'll cure you," which he did. As soon as my father was able, he went to his father's house, and found him ill in bed. They greeted each other with many tears, and a great intermixture of joy and sorrow. My father at length

perceiving him to tremble to such a degree that the bed shook under him, inquired how it was with him. He answered, "I feel no pain; 'tis the mighty power of God that shakes me." Then lying awhile in silence, he broke out into a sweet melody of spirit, saying, "In the Lord only have I righteousness and strength; in God have I salvation!"

The civil war continuing, my father found himself insecure at home; he therefore rejoined the army, and remained till near its conclusion, when he returned to Siddington (1645.) After some time, he married Lydia Tyndale, daughter of Thomas Tyndale, of [Melksham's-court,] Stinchcombe, in the same county; a religious family, and one of those distinguished by the appellation of Puritans. She had lately resided under the guardianship of an uncle; [both her parents being deceased, and the royalists having sacked and burnt the family mansion, which was occupied by her brother.] Matthew Hale, afterwards lord chief justice of England, was her kinsman, and drew the marriage settlement (1646.) They had six children; three of whom, John, Nathaniel, and Daniel, survived to years of maturity.

In 1655, two women friends came out of the north to Cirencester, and inquiring if there were any in that neighbourhood who feared God, were directed to my father as the likeliest person to

entertain them. They arrived at his house and desired a meeting, which he granted, inviting several of his acquaintance to sit with them. After it was over, he would have engaged them in conversation, but they said little, recommending him to Richard Farnsworth, then prisoner for the testimony of truth in Banbury Gaol, to whom they were going. In consequence of this recommendation, my father went shortly afterwards to the prison, where he found the two persons who had been at his house. The turnkey was denying them an entrance, telling them that he had orders not to let in any of those giddy-headed people; but that if they thought fit to enter, he would detain them. My father asking him if one Richard Farnsworth was there a prisoner, he replied, "Yes, Sir." "I desire to see him," answered my father, "and that these two women may be admitted with me." They were accordingly conducted through several small rooms to a dungeon,* where Richard Farnsworth was preaching through a grate to some persons in the street. He shortly desisted,

* Notwithstanding the contrariety of the two parties, they appear to have agreed in rendering the Society of Friends the victims of their intolerance, although its pacific character, as well in conduct as principle, might have claimed a reasonable exemption. In the preceding instance, we see its members excepted from that degree of indulgence, which, under the present usurpation of the government by Cromwell, was mostly granted the other sects; and we shall hereafter find them comprehended in the persecuting measures of an opposite faction.

and after a little term of silence, turning to them, spoke to this purpose :—That Zaccheus being a man of low stature, and having a mind to see Christ, ran before and climbed into a sycamore tree ; when our Saviour, knowing his good desires, called to him, “Zaccheus, come down : this day is salvation come to thy house.” That Zaccheus was like some in the present day, who were climbing as into the tree of knowledge, thinking to find Christ ; but that the word was, “Zaccheus, come down,” for that which is to be known of God, is manifested within. This, with more to the same effect, was spoken in such authority, that my father could not shake off the impression it made upon him, and when he came home, he told my mother that he had seen Richard Farnsworth, who had addressed his condition, as if he had known him from his youth. From this time he patiently bore the cross, and a necessity was soon after laid on him, one first-day morning, to go to the place of public worship at Cirencester. He went, and standing covered, the priest was silent, till being asked why he did not proceed, he answered, that he could not while that man stood with his hat on. Upon this, some present took him by the arm, and led him into the street, staying at the door to prevent his entrance ; but, after waiting a little, he found himself clear, and departed. As he passed the market-place, the tie of his shoe

slackened, and while he stooped to fasten it, a man came and struck him a hard blow with a stone, saying, "There, take that for Jesus Christ's sake." He quietly answered, "So I do," without looking back to see who it was. A few days after, a person came and asked him forgiveness, telling him that he was the unhappy man who gave him the blow, and that he could have no rest since he did it.

Shortly after, three other Friends found a like concern; and standing in the same place with their hats on, though they said nothing, the priest was again silent. On being asked if he was not well, he answered, that he could not go forward while those dumb dogs stood there. The people then dragged them out, and the priest afterwards informing a justice that they had interrupted him during divine service, they were bound over to the quarter sessions. My father, at their desire, accompanied them; and when they were called, and the priest accused them, the bench, in a rage, without asking them any questions, ordered their mittimus to be made. This unjust and illegal proceeding kindled my father's zeal, insomuch that, stepping forward, he called to the justices, saying, "Are not those who sit on the bench sworn to do justice? Is there not a man amongst you who will do the thing which is right?" On this, counsellor Stephens, of Lypiatt, then chairman,

cried out, "Who are you, sirrah? what is your name?" My father telling him, he returned, "I am glad I have you here; I have heard of you; you deserve a stone-doublet," meaning a prison; "there's many an honest man than you hanged." "It may be so," answered my father; "but what dost thou think becomes of those who hang honest men?" The justice replied, "I'll send you to prison; and if any insurrection or tumult be in the land, I'll come and cut your throat first with my own sword; for I am afraid to sleep in my bed, lest such fanatics should come and cut mine!" And in his fury, forgetting that he was a peace officer, he snatched up a ball of wax, and threw it violently at my father, who avoided the blow by stepping aside. Their mittimus was then made, and they were all sent to prison; on which occasion the following letter, dated from Gloucester Castle, appears to have been addressed:—

"DEAR AND LOVING WIFE,

"My dear love in the Lord is remembered to thee, with my love to my mother and to my children, and my love to all friends. This is to acquaint thee that I, with the rest of our friends here, are very well and in good health, blessed be the God of our salvation, who is the Rock of Ages, who always makes good His promises, and is near

to all them that call upon Him in truth and faithfulness. Dear heart, be not, be not discouraged, but wait on Him in the light of Himself, who is able to supply all thy wants, and be a husband to thee, and a father to thy children, and a present help in trouble. Dear friend, I have found the Father's love much to me, who hath counted me worthy to suffer for His truth's sake—He hath made my prison very pleasant to me, much beyond my expectation. I am well pleased with my present condition, waiting on the Lord alone for my deliverance, which will be in His time, and I regard not the tyranny of my adversaries, but commit my cause to Him who is a righteous judge.

“Dear heart! my desire is to see thee as soon as conveniently thou canst, if thou findest freedom in thyself; if any friend be free to come with thee I would desire thee, if thou wilt, to let thy son John ride before thee; if some else be with thee, thou mayst learn him the way.

“Dear friend, in patience possess thy soul, waiting always in the light which will lead thee to the fountain of life and light, which is God, blessed for ever; so I rest thy loving husband till death,

“JOHN ROBERTS.

“The 7th day of the 7th month, 1657,

“From my strong house in Gloucester.

“P.S.—My friends and fellow-sufferers, Robert

Silvester and Phillip Gray, desire to be remembered to friends, and my dear love to all friends."

Not long afterwards, Andrew Solliss, who was one of the magistrates on the bench, came to the Castle, and calling for my father, asked him if he was willing to have his liberty to return to his wife and family. "Upon what terms, uncle?" said my father.

Justice. Upon such terms that the gaoler open the doors, and let you out.

J. Roberts. What, without entering into any recognisance?

Justice. Yes.

J. Roberts. Then I accept of my liberty; but admire, uncle, how thou and several others could sit upon the bench as with your thumbs in your mouths, when you should have spoken a word in behalf of the innocent.

Justice. You must learn to live under a law, cousin; and if you will accept of your liberty till next sessions, you may have it; if not, stay where you are.

On this they parted, and my father returned agreeably to the justice's permission; but the following night a concern came upon him with so much weight, that it made him tremble, and my mother having asked him the cause, he said, "The

Lord requires hard things of me ; if it pleased Him, I had rather lay down my life." To this she replied, " If thou art fully persuaded that the Lord requires it, I would not have thee disobey Him, for He will expect nothing from us but what He will enable us to pass through ; we have, therefore, good cause to trust in Him." He answered, " I must go to this John Stephens, who is my great enemy, and sent me to prison, where he declared that he would secure me ; and as my uncle in kindness has given me leave to return, I can expect no more favour from him if I thus run myself into the mouth of my adversary. But I must go, whatever I suffer." Accordingly he arose early, and prepared for his journey, but durst eat or drink nothing ; and when he had mounted his horse, the impression was, " Remember Lot's wife, look not back." So he rode very cheerfully eight or nine miles, till he came within sight of the justice's house, when he began to reflect again that his uncle and neighbours would represent him as having no regard for his wife and family, in thus pushing himself into the hands of his greatest enemy. This brought such a cloud over his mind, that he alighted from his horse, and sat down in silence. After he had waited some time, the cloud was dissipated, and these words presented themselves, " Go, and I will go with thee, and will give

thee a threshing instrument, and thou shalt thresh the mountain." Now he was exceedingly overcome with the love of God, and saying in his heart, "Thy presence is enough," proceeded to the house with great satisfaction. It was still pretty early, but seeing the stable-door open, he went to the groom, and desired him to put up his horse. While this was doing, the justice's son and clerk came up, who roughly said, "I thought you had been in Gloucester Castle."

J. Roberts. So I was.

Clerk. And how came you out?

J. Roberts. When thou hast authority to demand it, I can give thee an answer; but my business is with thy master, if I may speak with him.

Clerk. You may, if you will promise to be civil.

J. Roberts. If thou see me uncivil, I desire thee to tell me of it.

They then went in, and my father took a turn in the hall whilst they acquainted the justice with his arrival. Changed entirely from his former conduct, he met him now with a pleasant countenance, taking him by the hand, and saying, "Friend Roberts, how do you do?" My father answered, "Pretty well," and then proceeded thus: "I am come in the dread of Heaven, to warn thee to repent of thy wickedness with speed, lest the Lord cut the thread of thy life, and send thee to the

pit which is bottomless. I am come to warn thee in great love, whether thou wilt hear or forbear, that thou mightest 'fear God, and give glory to His name, and worship Him who made heaven and earth, the sea, and the fountains of water.' " The justice then invited my father to sit down by him on his couch, and said, "I believe your message to be of God, and I receive it as such. I am sorry that I have done you wrong, and I will never wrong you more. I would pray you to forgive me, and to pray God to forgive me also." After much more discourse, he offered the best entertainment his house afforded, but my father excused himself on this occasion, acknowledging his kind acceptance of his friendship, and so in much love they parted.

The same day, William Dewsberry had appointed a meeting at Upton, near Tetbury, whither my mother went, but her concern was so great, on account of my father's exercise, that she could receive little benefit. After it was ended, William Dewsberry walked to and fro in a long passage, groaning in spirit; and at length coming up to my mother, though she was a stranger to him before, he laid his hand on hers, saying, "Thy sorrow is great; I sorrow with thee." Then walking a little again, he said to her, "Now the time is come when those who marry must be as though they married not, and those who have husbands as though they had

none, for the Lord calls for all to be offered." By this she saw that he had received an impression of her afflicting exercise, which she had not discovered to any; and it gave her such ease of mind, that she went home rejoicing in the Lord.

At the next sessions, my father and the three Friends appeared in court, where as soon as justice Stephens espied them, he called to my father, and said, "John, I accept of your appearance, and discharge you, and the court discharges you also." But my father not thinking his task accomplished, did not hasten to withdraw, on which his fees were demanded by the clerk of the sessions. He answered, "I know not that I owe anything here but love, and must I now purchase my liberty with money? I do not accept it upon such terms."

He was then ordered back to the Castle with his three friends, but in the evening they were discharged, and the chairman ever after carried himself very kindly towards him.

His next imprisonment was at Cirencester, at the suit of George Bull, rector of Upper and vicar of Lower Siddington, for tithes; where Elizabeth Hewlings, a widow, who resided near Cirencester, was also confined on the same account. She was a good Christian, and so useful amongst her neighbours, that Lady Dunch, of Down Amney, thought it would be an act of charity to purchase

her liberty, by paying the priest's demand, which she did. She came herself on this occasion to Cirencester, and sent her attendant, Alexander Cornwall, to the prison to bring Elizabeth to her.*

* She died on the 10th of the 7th month, 1670, and the following is the account given of her death in "Besse's Sufferings of the People called Quakers," folio edition, vol. i., page 216:—

"On the 10th of the 7th month, 1670, Thomas Masters, a justice, came to the meeting at Cirencester, and addressed himself to one of the persons present, saying, 'Roberts, what is the intent of your meeting here?' He answered, 'We meet for no evil end, the Lord knows. We meet together in the fear of the Lord, to wait upon Him.' Then said the justice, 'And to worship Him, do you not?' 'Yes,' said one of them. 'That's enough,' replied the justice, 'we need no farther evidence.' So he called his clerk, took their names, and fined them. One of the Friends asked, 'By what law are we convicted?' The justice answered, 'Why, you have confessed that you meet to worship God.' The Friend replied, 'Is that a crime?' 'Yes, that it is,' said the justice. 'Show us that law,' said the Friend. The justice replied, 'Here is a law, that you must not worship above five together, except at church; and as for your suffering, be it upon us.' The Friend answered, 'So said the Jews, His blood be upon us, but it proved a heavy burden upon them.' With that the justice trembled, and, in a rage, laid hands on several of them, and called his company to help him. The meeting being in an upper room, they brought the Friends to the top of the stairs, where one John Cooke, a wicked fellow, cried, 'Clear the stairs!' and Jenkins, said to be a hangman, assisting, they threw the Friends down stairs. An ancient widow, named Hewlings, by the violence of the fall, was lamentably bruised, and had her shoulder dislocated, of which she soon after died. She was a useful woman in the neighbourhood, and ready to do good to all. The coroner was sent for, a jury called, and

While she was making ready, my father and he fell into conversation, and on his understanding his name and residence, "What," said he, "are you that John Roberts, of Siddington, who keep great conventicles at your house?" My father answered, "The church of Christ often meets at my house. I suppose I am the man thou meanest." "I have often," replied Cornwall, "heard my lady speak of you, and I am sure she would gladly be acquainted with you." On his return, he told her that he had met with such a man in the prison as he believed she would not suffer to lie there for conscience' sake, withal informing her who it was. She immediately directed him to go back and invite him. He came accordingly to the gaol, and told my father that his lady wanted to speak with him. He answered, "If any body would speak with me, they must come where I am, for I am a prisoner." "Oh," said Cornwall, "I will get leave of the gaoler for you to go." When they arrived, the lady assumed a majestic air, to see how the Quaker would greet her. My father advanced

Jenkins was apprehended; but the justice having an influence over the jury, who were most of them his tenants, and the coroner being willing to favour the persecutors, smothered the blood of the innocent; and the jury, notwithstanding the clearest evidence of eye-witnesses, and the sight of the bruised body, grievous to behold, gave their verdict, '*That she died of God's visitation.*' Thus the murderer escaped, and was no more called in question."

towards her, and inquired whether she wished to speak with him.

Lady. Are you the person who keeps conventicles at his house?

J. Roberts. The church of Christ often meets at my house; I presume I am the man thou meanest.

Lady. What do you lie in prison for?

J. Roberts. Because, for conscience' sake, I cannot pay a hireling priest what he demands of me; therefore, like the false prophets of old, he prepares war against me, because I put not into his mouth.

Lady. From what I have heard of you, I take you to be a wise man; and if you cannot pay him yourself, you might let somebody pay him for you.

J. Roberts. That would be underhand dealing; and I had rather pay him at once than become a hypocrite.

Lady. Then suppose some neighbour or friend should pay him unknown to you, would you choose to lie in prison when you might have your liberty?

J. Roberts. I am very well content where I am, till it shall please God to make way for my enlargement.

Lady. I have a mind to set you at liberty, that I may have some of your company, which cannot well be whilst you are in prison.*

* "John Roberts, of Siddington, had cattle, malt, goods, and money taken from him for tithes, at several times, to the

Then speaking to her attendant, she bid him go to the priest's attorney, and tell him that she would satisfy him, and then pay the gaoler his fees, and procure a horse for my father to accompany her to Down Amney.

J. Roberts. If thou art a charitable person, as I take thee to be, there are abroad in the world many deserving objects; but to be the means of feeding such devourers as these, I do not consider charity. They are like Pharaoh's lean kine,—they eat up the fat and the goodly, and look not a whit the better.

Lady. Well, I would have you get ready to go with us.

J. Roberts. If thou desirest it, I intend to come and see thee at Down Amney, some other time.

Lady. That will suit me better; but set your day, and I will lay aside all other business to have your company.

J. Roberts. If it please God to give me life,

value of £76. The same person was also committed to Ciren-
cester Gaol, at the suit of George Bull, priest; but Lady
Dunch, of pure charity and compassion, paid the priest about
four pounds, and also the gaoler's fees, and so set him at
liberty, saying, '*That she could not be at peace till she had
done it.*' Thus Providence sometimes unexpectedly raises up
friends to succour the distressed."—See *Besse's Sufferings of
Friends*, folio edition, vol. i., page 221.

health, and liberty, I intend to visit thee on seventh day next, the day thou callest Saturday.

Lady. Is that as far as you use to promise?

J. Roberts. Yes.

According to his appointment my father went, and found her very inquisitive about the things of God, and attentive to the truths he delivered. She engaged him likewise a second time, and treated him with abundance of regard. On a third occasion she sent her servant to fix a day when he would pay her another visit; and ordered him next to go to Thomas Careless, then priest of Cirencester, whom she greatly admired, and desire him to come and take a dinner with her at the same time, but not to let either of them know that the other was to be there. My father set out accordingly; and when he had arrived within sight of the house, hearing a horse behind him, he looked back, and saw the priest following, which made him conclude that the lady had projected to bring them together. When the priest came up with him, he said, "Well overtaken, how far are you going this way?" My father answered, "I believe we are both going to the same place." They rode in together; but the lady being ill, a servant went up and informed her of their arrival. "I admire," said she, "that they came in company; but do you beckon John Roberts, and bring him up to me

first." When my father came in, she told him that she had been very ill; adding, "I have heard that you have done good in many distempers."

J. Roberts. I confess I have, but to thy complaint I am a stranger. I once, indeed, knew a man, who lived at ease, and fared delicately, as thou mayest do; and whilst he continued in that practice he was much afflicted. But it pleased God to visit him with the knowledge of His blessed truth, which brought him to a more regular and abstemious life, and this preserved him more free from it.

Lady. Oh, I know what you aim at; you want to have me a Quaker. And I confess, that if I could be such a one as you are, I would be a Quaker to-morrow. But I understand Mr. Careless is below; and though you are persons of different persuasions, yet I account you both wise and godly men, and some moderate discourse concerning the things of God between you, I believe, would do me good.

J. Roberts. If he ask me any questions, as the Lord shall enable me, I shall endeavour to give him an answer.

She then sent for the clergyman; and, after a few compliments, proceeded as follows:—"I am disappointed of your company by my illness; but as you are persons of different persuasions, though,

I believe, both good Christians, if you would soberly ask and answer each other a few questions, it would relieve and divert me."

T. Careless. It will not edify your ladyship; for I have discoursed with John and others of his persuasion divers times, and I have read their books, and all to no purpose, for they sprung from the Papists, and hold the same doctrine. Let John deny it, if he can.

J. Roberts. I find thou art setting us out in very dark characters with a design to affright me; but herein thou wilt be mistaken. I advise thee to say no worse of us than thou canst establish; and if thou canst prove me like a Papist in one thing, with the help of God I will prove thee like them in ten.

T. Careless. The Quakers hold the damnable doctrine and dangerous tenet of perfection in this life, and so do the Papists. If you attempt to deny this, John, I can prove you hold it.

J. Roberts. I doubt thou art now going to misrepresent the Papists behind their backs, as thou hast heretofore served us. For, by what I have heard of their principles, they do not believe a state of freedom from sin, and acceptance with God, to be [generally] attainable on this side the grave; and have therefore imagined to themselves a place of purgation after death. But whether they believe such a state attainable or not, I do.

T. Careless. Please your ladyship, John has confessed enough out of his own mouth, for that is a damnable doctrine, and dangerous tenet.

J. Roberts. I would ask thee one question: dost thou believe in a purgatory?

T. Careless. No.

J. Roberts. Then the Papists, in this case, are wiser than thou. They confess the saying of Christ, who told the unbelieving Jews, that if they died in their sins, whither He went they could not come. But, from thy discourse, thou and thy followers must needs be going to destruction, since thou neither ownest a place of purgation after death, nor such a state of preparation to be possible in this life as is absolutely necessary. The Scripture, thou knowest, tells us, that where death leaves us, judgment will find us. If the tree falls towards the north, or towards the south, there it must lie; and since no unclean thing can enter the kingdom of heaven, pray tell this poor woman, to whom thou hast been preaching for lucre sake, whether ever or never she may expect to be freed from her sins, and made fit for a place therein; or whether the blind must lead the blind, till both fall into the ditch.

T. Careless. No, you mistake me; I believe that God Almighty is able, of His great mercy, to forgive persons their sins, and to fit them for heaven, a little before they depart this life.

J. Roberts. I believe the same; but, if thou wilt limit the Holy One of Israel, for how long a time wilt thou give Him leave to prepare a man for His glorious kingdom?

T. Careless. It may be an hour or two.

J. Roberts. My faith is a day or two, as well as an hour or two.

T. Careless. I believe so too.

J. Roberts. Or a week or two.

From which he carried it to a month or two, and so gradually till he had brought it to seven years, the priest still confessing that he believed the same. On this he proceeded:—"How couldst thou accuse me of Popery, in holding this doctrine, which thou hast thus acknowledged? If I am like a Papist, thou art, by thy own confession, as like a Papist as I am. And if it be a damnable doctrine and dangerous tenet in the Quakers, is it not the same in thyself? Thou told'st me that I mistook thee, but hast thou not mistaken thyself, in condemning thy own opinion, when expressed by another? But notwithstanding thou hast failed of making me out a Papist in this particular, canst thou do it in any thing else?" On this the priest being mute, my father thus continued, "Well, though thou hast failed of proving me like a Papist, it need not hinder me from showing thee to be so in many things. For instance, you build houses and con-

secrete them, calling them churches, as do the Papists: you hang bells in them, and consecrate them, calling them by the names of saints,—so do they: the pope and priests of the Romish church wear surplices, hoods, cassocks, &c., terming them their ornaments; thou hast the like, and dost not thou also style them thy ornaments? You consecrate the ground where you inter your dead, calling it holy ground,—so do they. In short, Thomas, in these, and many other things, one had need be a wise man to distinguish between you.”

At this the priest appeared uneasy, and said to the lady, “Madam, I must beg your excuse, for there is to be a lecture this afternoon, and I must be there.” She pressed him to stay dinner, but he earnestly desired to be excused. So a slice or two being cut off the spit, and brought him, he ate, and took his leave.

The lady then told my father that had she not seen it, she could not have believed that Mr. Careless could have been so foiled in discourse. “For,” said she, “I accounted him as sound and orthodox as divine as any; but now, I must tell you, I am so far of your opinion, that if you will let me know when you have a meeting at your house, and some one to preach, not a silent meeting, I will come and hear them myself.” Not long after, two Friends came on a seventh day to my father’s; and, though

the weather was very severe, he found he could not be easy without acquainting her with it. He accordingly informed her next morning of the two Friends, and of their intention of having a meeting at his house. "How can you expect," said she, "that I should go out such weather as this? You know I seldom stir from my chamber, and to venture so far may endanger my health." My father returned, "I would not have thee make excuses, as some of old did, and were not found worthy. Thou knowest that time is none of ours; and we know not whether we may have the like opportunity again. The snow need not much incommode thee; thou mayest be quickly in thy coach, and pulling up the glasses, mayest be pretty warm; and when thou comest to my house, I know my wife will do her best for thee." On this she ordered her coach to be got ready, for the distance was seven miles, saying, "John is like death, he will not be denied." My father came with her, and during the time of silence in the meeting, she appeared somewhat restless, but was very attentive whilst either of the Friends were speaking. Dinner being ended, she returned home well satisfied; and came several times thither to meeting afterwards, till going up to London she was there taken ill and died.*

* The benevolence and candour of this distinguished personage have justly entitled her name to honourable remem-

Her attendant, Alexander Cornwall, was convinced, and imprisoned with my father and other friends at Gloucester, where the gaoler was very cruel to them, sometimes putting them into the common gaol among felons; and at others hiring a tinker, who lay for his fees, to trouble them in the night by playing on his hautboy. On one occasion, my father being concerned to speak to him in the dread and power of God, it struck him to such a degree, that he dropped the instrument out of his hand, and would never employ it in that way again. When the gaoler asked him why he discontinued it, he answered, "They are the servants of the living God, and I will never play any more to disturb them, though you should hang me up at the door for it." "What!" said the gaoler, "are you bewitched too? I'll turn you out of the Castle." He did so; on which the Friends, who were there prisoners, raising him some money, clothed, and dismissed him.

My father had afterwards three conferences with William Nicholson, bishop of Gloucester, which were introduced in the following manner. An apparitor came and cited him to appear at the bishop's court, but withal told him that he could not

brance. She was the only surviving daughter and heiress of Sir Anthony Hungerford, of Down Amney; and widow of Edmund Dunch, esquire.

encourage him to come, lest they should ensnare and send him to prison. At the same time he summoned a servant of his, John Overall. My father went at the time mentioned, without his servant, when the conversation was in substance as follows.

Bishop. What is your name?

J. Roberts. I have been called by my name, and answered to it.

Bishop. I desire to hear it again.

J. Roberts. John Roberts.

Bishop. Well, you were born Roberts, but you were not born John. Pray, who gave you that name?

J. Roberts. Thou hast asked me a very hard question, my name having been given me before I was capable of remembering who gave it. But I suppose it was my parents, they being the only persons who had a right to do so, and I believe none need to call it in question now.

Bishop. No, no; how many children have you?

J. Roberts. It pleased God to give me six children—three of whom He has been pleased to take from me; the others are still living.

Bishop. And how many of them have been baptized?

J. Roberts. What dost thou mean by that?

Bishop. What! do you not own baptism?

J. Roberts. Yes; but perhaps we may differ in that point.

Bishop. What baptism do you own? That of the Spirit, I suppose.

J. Roberts. Yes. What other baptism should I own?

Bishop. Do you own but one?

J. Roberts. If one be sufficient, what need of more? The apostle said, "One Lord, one faith, one baptism."

Bishop. What say you of the baptism of water?

J. Roberts. I say, there was a man sent from God whose name was John, who had a real commission for it; and he is the only man I read of who was empowered for that work.

Bishop. But what if I make it appear to you that some of Christ's disciples themselves baptized with water after his ascension?

J. Roberts. I suppose that is no very difficult task; but what is it to me?

Bishop. Is it nothing to you what Christ's disciples themselves did?

J. Roberts. Paul, whom I suppose thou wilt grant to have had as extensive a commission as any of the apostles, honestly confesses he had no commission to baptize with water; and further says, "I thank God I baptized none but" such and such, "for I was not sent to baptize, but to preach the Gospel." And if he was not sent, I would soberly ask thee, who required it at his hands?

Perhaps he might have as few thanks for his labour as thou mayest for thine; and I would willingly know, who sent thee to baptize?

Bishop. This is not our present business. You are here returned for not going to church. What say you to that?

J. Roberts. I desire to see my accusers.

Bishop. They are the minister and churchwardens of your own parish. Do you deny it?

J. Roberts. Yes, I do; for it is my constant principle and practice to go to church.

Bishop. And do you, then, go to church?


J. Roberts. Yes; and sometimes the church comes to me.

Bishop. The church comes to you! I don't understand you, friend.

J. Roberts. That may be; it is often for want of a good understanding that the innocent are made to suffer.

Apparitor. My lord, he keeps meetings at his house, and calls that a church.

J. Roberts. No; I no more believe my house to be a church, than I believe what you call so to be one. I call the people of God the church of God, wheresoever they are met to worship Him in spirit and in truth. And when I say the church comes to me, I mean an assembly of such worshippers who frequently meet at my house; for the true



church is not the workmanship of men's hands, but consists of living stones, and is built up by Christ, a spiritual house to God.

Bishop. We call it a church figuratively, meaning the place where the church meets.

J. Roberts. I fear you call it a church hypocritically and deceitfully, with a design to awe the people into a veneration for the place which is not due to it, as though your consecrations had made it holier than another.

Bishop. What, then, do you call that which we call a church?

J. Roberts. It may properly enough be called a mass-house, having been formerly built for that purpose.

Apparitor. Mr. Roberts, it is expected that you should show more respect in this place than you do, in keeping on your hat.

J. Roberts. Who expects it?

Apparitor. My lord bishop.

J. Roberts. I expect better things from him.

Bishop. No, no, keep on your hat; I don't expect it from you.

Presently, he continued, "Well, friend, this is not a convenient time and place for you and I to dispute; but I may take you to my chamber, and convince you of your errors."

J. Roberts. I should take it kindly of thee, or

any one else, to convince me of any errors that I hold, and would hold them no longer.

Bishop. Call some others.

My father's servant was then called for, but not appearing, the apparitor said, "Mr. Roberts, is John Overall here?"

J. Roberts. I believe not.

Bishop. What is the reason he is not here?

J. Roberts. In the first place, he is an old man, and not of ability to undertake the journey, except on a very good account. In the second, he is my servant, and I cannot spare him from my business during my absence.

Bishop. Why does he not go to church, then?

J. Roberts. He does go to church with me.—(At this the court fell a laughing.)

Bishop. Call somebody else.

Then a Baptist preacher was called, who seeing the bishop's civility to my father in suffering him to keep on his hat, thought to take the same liberty. On this the bishop assumed a stern countenance, and said, "Don't you know that this is the king's court, and that I sit here to represent his majesty's person? And do you come here in an uncivil and irreverent manner, in contempt of his majesty and this court, with your hat on? I confess there are some men in the world who make a conscience of not putting off their hats, to whom we ought to

have some regard ; but for you, who can put it off to every mechanic you meet, to come here, in contempt of authority, with it on, I'll assure you, friend, you'll speed never the better for it."—I have heard my father say that these words came so honestly from the bishop, that it did him good to hear them.

Baptist. (Taking off his hat.) Please you, my lord, I have not been well in my head.

Bishop. Why you have a cap on ; nay, you have two caps on ! What is your reason for denying your children the holy ordinance of baptism ?

Baptist. Please you, my lord, I am not well satisfied about it.

Bishop. What are the grounds of your dissatisfaction ? Did you ever see a book I published, entitled "The Order of Baptism ?"

Baptist. No, my lord.

Bishop. I thought so.

Then informing him how and where it was to be met with, he gave him a certain time to peruse it, and told him if that would not satisfy him, to come to him, and he would give him full satisfaction.

Some time after, the bishop sent his officers to apprehend my father, but he was then gone to Bristol with George Fox. They came several times, and searched the house in pursuit of him, pretending they only wanted to see him respecting

a small trespass, which might soon be accommodated. My mother answered, that she did not believe any neighbour he had would trouble him on such an account; for that if by chance any of his cattle trespassed, he would readily make satisfaction, as they well knew. On these occasions, however, she would order meat and drink to be set before them; but my father staying away longer than was expected, they imagined he absconded for fear of them, and therefore offered my mother, if she would give them twenty shillings, to suffer him to return for a month. She told them that as she knew of no wrong he had done to any man, she would give them no money, since that would imply a consciousness of guilt; "but," added she, "if my enemy hunger, I can feed him; and if he thirst, I can give him drink." On this they flew into a rage, and declared they would have him if he were above ground, for that none could pardon him but the king. My father returning homewards through Tetbury, was there informed that the bailiffs had been about his house almost ever since he left it. When he had entered his own grounds, the moon shining bright, he espied the shadow of a man, and exclaimed, "Who's there?" "It's I," said the person, who was a bailiff.

J. Roberts. Who? Stubbs?

Stubbs. Yes, master.

J. Roberts. Hast thou anything against me ?

Stubbs. No, master ; I might, but I would not meddle. I have wronged you enough already, God forgive me. Those who now lay in wait for you are the Paytons, my lord bishop's bailiffs. I would not have you fall into their hands, for they are merciless rogues ; but ever whilst you live please a knave, for an honest man won't hurt you.

My father came home, and desired us not to let the officers in upon him that night, that he might have an opportunity of taking counsel on his pillow ; and the next morning he related to my mother what he had seen in a vision. "I thought," said he, "that I was walking in a pleasant green way, but it was narrow, and had a wall on each side. Before me lay something like a bear, but more dreadful, the sight of which put me to a stand. A man, seeing me surprised, came up with a smiling countenance, and said, 'Why art afraid, friend ? It is chained, and cannot hurt thee.' I answered, 'The way is so narrow, I cannot pass, but it may reach me.' 'Be not afraid,' he returned, 'it cannot hurt thee.' I thought he spoke in great good will, and that his face shone like the face of an angel ; on which I took courage, and, stepping forwards, laid my hand on its head." The construction he put on this to my mother

was, "Truth is a narrow way, and this bishop lies before me. I must go to him, however I suffer." He rose accordingly, and set out, calling on Amariah Drewett, a Friend, of Cirencester, to accompany him. When they arrived at the bishop's residence, which was then at Cleeve, near Gloucester, they found a butcher's wife, of Cirencester, come to intercede for her husband, who had been put into the bishop's court for killing meat on First-days. Two young sparks of the bishop's attendants having asked her if she knew John Roberts, she replied, "Yes, very well." "What is he for a man?" said they. "A very good man," answered she, "setting aside his religion; but I have nothing to say for that." One of them declared he would give five shillings to see him, the other ten; and they had scarcely done speaking before my father entered, but they said nothing. The bishop, on being informed of his arrival, dismissed his company, and sent for him up stairs. He found him seated, with his hat under his arm, assuming a majestic air. He stood silent awhile, but finding the bishop did not begin with him, he approached nearer, and said, "My business is with thee."

Bishop. What is your business with me?

J. Roberts. I understand thou hast sent out thy bailiffs to take me, but I rather choose to come of

myself, to know what wrong I have committed. If it appear I have done thee any, I am ready to make thee satisfaction; but if upon inquiry I am found to be innocent, I desire thee, for thy own soul's sake, not to injure me.

Bishop. You are misinformed, friend; I am not your adversary.

J. Roberts. Then I would desire thee to tell me who is my adversary, that I may go and agree with him.

Bishop. The king is your adversary; the king's laws you have broken, and to the king you shall answer.

J. Roberts. Our subjection to laws is either active or passive. So that if a man cannot for conscience' sake do the thing which the law requires, but passively suffers what the law inflicts, the law, I conceive, is as fully answered as if he had actually obeyed.

Bishop. You are wrong in that too; for suppose a man steal an ox, and be taken and hanged for the fact, what restitution is that to the owner?

J. Roberts. None at all; but though it is no restitution to the owner, yet the law is fully satisfied. Though the owner is a loser, the criminal has suffered the punishment which the law inflicts, as an equivalent for the crime committed. But thou mayst herein see the corruptness of such

laws, which put the life of a man upon a level with the life of a beast.

Bishop. What! Do such men as you find fault with our laws?

J. Roberts. Yes; and I will tell thee plainly, it is high time wiser men were chosen to make better laws. For if this thief were taken and sold for a proper term, according to the law of Moses, and the owner had four oxen for his ox, and four sheep for his sheep, he would be well satisfied, and the man's life preserved, that he might repent and amend his ways. But I hope thou dost not accuse me of having stolen any man's ox or ass.

Bishop. No, no; God forbid!

J. Roberts. Then, if thou please to give me leave, I will state a case more parallel to the matter in hand.

Bishop. You may.

J. Roberts. In days past, Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon, set up an image, and made a decree, that all who would not bow down to it should be cast the same hour into a burning furnace. There were then three young men, who served the same God that I do now, and these durst not bow down to it, but passively submitted their bodies to the flames. Was not that a sufficient satisfaction to the unjust decree of the king?

Bishop. Yes, certainly, for that was to worship

the workmanship of men's hands, which is idolatry ; but yours is a strange, upstart religion, of a very few years' standing, in which you are grown so confident that there is no beating you out of it.

J. Roberts. Out of my religion ! God forbid ! I was a long time seeking an acquaintance with the living God amongst dead forms, and inquiring after the right way and worship before I could find them ; and now I hope that neither thou, nor any man living, will be able to beat me out of it. But though thou art an ancient man and a bishop, I find thou art very ignorant of the rise and antiquity of our religion.

Bishop (smiling). Do you Quakers pretend antiquity for your religion ?

J. Roberts. Yes ; and I do not question but, with the help of God, I can make it appear that our religion was many hundred years before thine was thought of.

Bishop. You see I have given you liberty of discourse, and have not sought to ensnare you in your words ; but if you can make the Quakers' religion appear to be many hundred years older than mine, you will speed the better.

J. Roberts. If I do not, I seek no favour at thy hands ; but, in order to do it, I hope thou wilt give me leave to ask a few sober questions.

Bishop. You may.

J. Roberts. Then first I would ask thee where thy religion was in Oliver's days, to go no farther back ? The Common Prayer-book was then become, even among the clergy, like an old almanack, very few regarding it in our country. There were two or three priests, indeed, who stood honestly to their principles, and suffered pretty much, but the far greater number turned with the tide ; and we have reason to believe, that if Oliver had put mass into their mouths, they would have conformed even to that for their interests.

Bishop. What would you have had us do ? Would you have had Oliver cut our throats ?

J. Roberts. No, by no means. But what religion was that you were afraid to venture your throats for ? Be it known to thee, I ventured my throat for my religion in Oliver's days, as I do now.

Bishop. And I must tell you, though in Oliver's days I did not dare own it so openly as I now do, yet I never acknowledged any other religion.

J. Roberts. Then I suppose thou madest a conscience of it ; and I should abundantly rather choose to fall into such a man's hands, than into the hands of one who makes no conscience towards God, but who will conform to anything for his interests. But if thou didst not think thy religion worth venturing thy throat for in Oliver's days, I desire thee to consider that it is not worth cutting

other men's throats for now, who do not conform to it.

Bishop. You say right; I hope we shall have care how we cut men's throats. But you know the Common Prayer-book was long before Oliver's days. (Several other persons were now come into the room.)

J. Roberts. Yes; I have good reason to know that, for I was brought up under a Common-Prayer priest, and a poor drunken old man he was. Sometimes he was so drunk that he could not repeat his prayers at all, and at best he could hardly say them; though I think he was a far better man than he who is priest there now.

Bishop. Who is your minister now?

J. Roberts. My minister is Christ Jesus, the minister of the everlasting covenant; but the present priest of the parish is George Bull.

Bishop. Do you say that drunken old man was better than Mr. Bull? I tell you, I account Mr. Bull as sound, able, and orthodox as divine as any we have among us.

J. Roberts. I am sorry for that, for if he is one of the best among you, I believe the Lord will not suffer you long. For he is a proud, ambitious, ungodly man. He has often sued me at law, and brought his people to swear against me wrongfully. On one occasion, his servants themselves confessed

before mine, that I might have their ears, for that their master had made them drunk, and then told them that they were set down in the list as witnesses against me, and must swear to it, which they did, and brought treble damages ; one of them besides acknowledged that he had already obtained the tithe from my tenant, threshed it out, and sold it for his master. They have also several times taken my cattle out of my grounds, driven them to fairs and markets, and disposed of them for anything that was offered, without giving me any account.

Bishop. I do assure you I will inform Mr. Bull of what you say.

J. Roberts. Very well ; and if thou please to send for me to face him, I shall make much more appear before his face, than I will say behind his back.

Bishop. But I remember you said you would make it appear that your religion was long before mine, and that is what I want to hear you make out.

J. Roberts. Our religion, as thou mayst read in the Scriptures, was established by Christ, between sixteen and seventeen hundred years ago ; when He told the woman of Samaria, that neither in that mountain, nor yet at Jerusalem, was the place of true worship ; they worshipped they knew not what. "For," said He, "God is a Spirit, and they that worship Him, must worship Him in spirit and in truth." This is our religion. It hath ever been

the religion of all who have worshipped God acceptably through the several ages, down to this time; and will be that of the true spiritual worshippers of God to the world's end; a religion performed by the assistance of the Spirit of God, and instituted by Christ himself; before the Mass-book, Service-book, or Directory, or any of those traditions or inventions of men, which in the night of apostacy were set up.

Bishop. Are all the Quakers of the same opinion?

J. Roberts. Yes, they are. If any hold doctrines contrary to that taught by Christ to the woman of Samaria, they are not of us.

Bishop. Do you own the Trinity?

J. Roberts. I do not remember such a word in the Holy Scriptures.

Bishop. Do you own three persons?

J. Roberts. I believe that there are Three that bear record in heaven, and that these Three are One; thou mayst make as many persons of them as thou canst. But I would soberly ask thee, since the Scriptures say that the heaven of heavens cannot contain Him, and that He is incomprehensible, by what person or likeness thou canst comprehend the Almighty?

Bishop. Yours is the strangest of all persuasions; for though there are many sects, (which he named,) and though we and they differ in some circum-

stances, yet in fundamentals we agree as one. But I observe that you, of all others, strike at the very root and basis of our religion.

J. Roberts. Art thou sensible of that?

Bishop. Yes.

J. Roberts. I am glad of that, for the root is rottenness, and truth strikes at its very foundation. The little stone, which Daniel saw cut out of the mountain without hands, will overturn all in God's due time, after you have done all you can to support it. But as for the others which thou hast mentioned, there is so little difference between you, that many wonder why you differ at all. And yet, I am fully convinced there are at this day many true spiritual worshippers in all persuasions.

Bishop. But you will not give us the same liberty as you give a common mechanic, to call our tools by their proper names.

J. Roberts. I would desire thee to explain thyself.

Bishop. Why you give a carpenter leave to call his gimlet a gimlet, and his gouge a gouge ; but you call our church a mass-house.

J. Roberts. I wish you were half as honest as carpenters.

Bishop. Why do you upbraid us?

J. Roberts. I would not upbraid you ; but I will endeavour to show wherein you fall short of them. Suppose I have a son intended to learn the trade

of a carpenter, I indent with an honest man of that calling, in consideration of so much money, to teach my son his trade in such a term of years, at the end of which he may be as good, or perhaps a better workman than his master, and he shall be at liberty from him to follow the business for himself. Now will you be as honest as this carpenter? You are men who pretend to know more of light, life, and salvation, and of the things pertaining to the kingdom of heaven, than we do. I would ask, in how long a time you would undertake to teach us as much as you know, and what we shall give you, that we may be at once free from our masters? But here you are keeping us, that we may be always paying you. Plainly, it is a very cheat. What! shall we be always learning, and never able to come to the knowledge of God! Miserable sinners you found us, and miserable sinners you leave us.

Bishop. Are you then against confession?

J. Roberts. No; for I believe that those who confess and forsake their sins will find mercy at the hand of God, whilst those who persist in them will be punished. But if ever you intend to be better, you must turn over a new leaf; for if you keep on in your old lesson, you must always be doing what you ought not, and leaving undone what you ought to do, and you can never do worse. I believe in my heart you mock God.

Bishop. How dare you say so?

J. Roberts. I'll state the case, and thou shalt judge. Suppose thou hadst a son, and thou shouldst daily let him know what thou wouldst have him do, and he should, week by week, and year after year, provoke thee to thy face, and say—"Father, I have not done what thou commandest me, but quite the contrary;" and continue to provoke thee in this manner once or oftener every week, wouldst thou not think him a rebellious child, and that his application to thee was mere mockery, and would it not occasion thee to disinherit him? (After some more discourse, my father observed to him that the time was far spent, and added)—If nothing will serve thee but my body in a prison, here it is in thy power; and if thou commandest me to deliver myself up, either to the sheriff, or to the gaoler of Gloucester Castle, as thy prisoner, I will go; and seek no other judge, advocate, or attorney, to plead my cause, but the Great Judge of heaven and earth, who knows I have nothing but love and good-will in my heart towards thee and all mankind.

Bishop. No; you shall go home about your business.

J. Roberts. Then I desire thee, for the future, not to trouble thyself to send any more bailiffs after me; for if thou please at any time to let me know,

by a line or two, that thou wouldst speak to me, though it be to send me to prison, if I am well and able, I'll come.

The bishop then inquired for something to drink; but my father acknowledged his kindness, and excused himself from drinking. Presently, the bishop being called out of the room, one Cuthbert, who took offence at my father's freedom with him, said, "Roberts, you are afraid of nothing; I never met with such a man in my life. I am afraid for my life, lest such fanatics as you should cut my throat as I sleep."

J. Roberts. I do not wonder thou art afraid.

Cuthbert. Why should I be afraid, any more than you?

J. Roberts. Because I am under the protection of Him who numbereth the very hairs of my head, and without whose Providence a sparrow shall not fall to the ground; but thou hast Cain's mark of envy on thy forehead, and, like him, art afraid lest whoever meets thee should kill thee.

Cuthbert (in a great rage). If all the Quakers in England are not hanged in a month's time, I'll be hanged for them.

J. Roberts (smiling). Prithee, friend, remember and be as good as thy word.

Some time after this, the bishop and his chancellor, with Thomas Master, Esq., of Cirencester Abbey,

and about twenty clergymen, made my father's house in their way to the visitation, which was to be at Tetbury the next day. They stopped at the gate, and George Evans, the bishop's kinsman, rode into the yard to call my father, who coming to the bishop's coach-side, he put out his hand (which my father respectfully took), saying, "I could not well go through this part of the country without calling to see you."

J. Roberts. That is very kind; wilt thou please to alight, and come in with those who are along with thee?

Bishop. I thank you, John; we are going to Tetbury, and time will not admit of it now: but I will drink with you, if you please.

My father went in, and having ordered some liquor, returned to the coach-side.

G. Evans. John, is your house free to entertain such men as we are?

J. Roberts. Yes, George, I entertain honest men, and sometimes others.

G. Evans. My lord, John's friends are the honest men, and we are the others.

J. Roberts. That's not fair, George; thou art putting thy own construction upon my words.

Esquire Master then left his coach, and stood by the bishop's; and the chancellor, in a jocose humour, said to my father, "My lord and these

gentlemen have been viewing your churchyard, or burying-ground, as you call it, and we think you keep it very decent." (This was a small piece of ground which my father had given to his friends for that purpose, at the lower end of his orchard.)

J. Roberts. Yes; though we are against pride, we think it commendable to be decent.

Presently the liquor was brought; and when the bishop had drunk, he said, "I commend you, John, you keep a cup of good beer in your house; I have not drunk any that has pleased me better since I came from home." The cup being returned to my father, Esquire Master said to him, "Now, old school-fellow, I hope you'll drink to me."

J. Roberts. Thou knowest it is not my practice; if it was, I would as soon drink to thee, my old acquaintance and school-fellow, as to any man; but if thou please to drink, thou art very welcome.

Esquire Master (taking the cup). Now, John, before my lord and these gentlemen, tell me what ceremony or compliment you Quakers use when you drink?

J. Roberts. None at all. For me to drink to another, and drink the liquor myself, is at best but a compliment, and that borders much on a lie.

My father next offering the cup to priest Bull, he refused it, saying, "It is full of hops and heresy."

J. Roberts. As for hops I cannot say much, not having been at the brewing of it; but as for heresy, I do assure thee, neighbour Bull, there is one in my beer; and if thou please to drink, thou art welcome. Here, thy lord bishop hath drunk of it, and commends it; he finds no heresy in the cup.

Bishop (leaning over the coach-door, and whispering to my father). John, I advise you to take care that you don't offend against the higher powers. I have heard great complaints against you; that you are the ringleader of the Quakers in this country, and that, if you are not suppressed, it will signify nothing. Therefore, pray, John, take care for the future that you don't offend any more.

J. Roberts. I like thy counsel very well, and intend to take it. But thou knowest God is the higher power, and you mortal men, however advanced in this world, are but the lower; and it is only because I endeavour to be obedient to the will of the higher powers, that the lower are angry with me. But I hope, with the assistance of God, to be subject to the higher powers, let the power do with me as it may please Him to suffer them.

Bishop. I want some more discourse with you. Will you go with me to Mr. Bull's?

J. Roberts. Thou knowest he hath no good-will towards me; I had rather attend thee elsewhere.

Bishop. Will you come to-morrow to Tetbury?

J. Roberts. Yes, if thou desirest it.

Bishop. Well, I do.

He then took his leave; and my father the next morning proceeded to Tetbury, taking his son Nathaniel with him, in case the bishop, in compliance with the violent clamours of the priests, should send him to prison, which he expected. As they were going up the street, they were met by Anthony Sharp, of Ireland, whose mother lived in the town. Having understood from my father where he was going, he asked him if he would accept of a companion. "If thou hast a mind to go to prison," says he, "thou mayst go with me." "I'll venture that," replied Anthony, "for if I do, I shall have good company." When they came to the foot of the stairs which led to the bishop's chamber, they were espied by George Evans, who said, "Come up, John, my lord thought you long." The bishop, who was just sitting down to dinner with a number of clergymen, would have made room for my father to sit beside him, but he excused himself, and retired with his friends till dinner was over. The bishop then spoke to the mistress of the house for another room, which, it being market-day, and my father well known in the

neighbourhood, was soon filled with priests and clothiers.

Bishop (putting on a stern countenance). Come, John, I must turn over a new leaf with you; and if you will not promise me to go to church, and to keep no more of those seditious conventicles at your house, I must make your mittimus, and send you to prison.

J. Roberts. Wouldst thou have me shut my doors against my friends? It was but yesterday that thou thyself, and many others here present, were at my house; and I was so far from shutting my doors against you, that I invited you in, and you should have been welcome to the best entertainment I had.

Bishop. I speak of those meetings which you keep at your house, to the terror of the country.

J. Roberts. This I'll promise thee, before all this company, that if any ill-minded persons come to my house, to plot or conspire against the king or government, if I know it, I'll be the first informer against them myself, though I have not a penny for my labour. But if honest and sober people come thither to wait upon and worship the God of heaven in spirit and in truth, such shall be welcome to me as long as I have a house for them to meet in; and should I have none, the Lord will provide one for them.

Bishop. Will you promise to go to your own parish church, and hear Divine service?

J. Roberts. I can promise no such thing. The last time I attended any, I was required to bear a [silent] testimony against a hireling priest, who was preaching for hire and divining for money; at which he was angry, and caused the people to turn me out. And I do not intend to trouble them again till they learn more civility, except the Lord require it of me.

Bishop. Send for the constable; I must take another course.

J. Roberts. If thou shouldst have come to my house under pretence of friendship, and, in a Judas-like manner, have betrayed me hither to send me to prison, as I have hitherto commended thee for thy moderation, I should then have occasion to put thy name in print, and make it a reproach with all sober people. But it is those priests who set thee on mischief. I would not have thee hearken to them, but bid them take up some honest vocation, and rob their neighbours no longer. They are like a company of caterpillars, which destroy the fruits of the earth, and live on the produce of our labours.

Priest Rich (of North Cerney). Who are those you call caterpillars?

J. Roberts. We husbandmen call those cater-

pillars which live on the fruits of our fields, and on the sweat of our brows; and if thou dost so, thou mayst be one of them.*

Bishop. This won't do. Make their mittimus. What's your name?

A. Sharp. Anthony Sharp.

Bishop. Where do you live?

* The character of the times will account, in some degree, for the apparent severity of these observations. Besides the levity complained of in this and the two preceding reigns, the late ejection of two thousand clergy from the Establishment under the Act of Uniformity, must have proportionably depreciated the subscribing members in the popular estimation; while succeeding statutes confirmed or remodelled the intolerant enactments which had disgraced the reign of Elizabeth. Excessive distraints and other vexations rendered it obvious that many of the inferior clergy had fully entered into the spirit of these inflictions; and would concede nothing either to the conscientious motives or the patient endurance manifested by the members of this community. The latter, in the preceding instance, were actuated by a persuasion that all authority for a fixed and compulsory maintenance had been restricted to the Mosaic priesthood, and that its continuance was inconsistent with the example and precepts, as well as the functions, of the Messiah. They thought this inference corroborated by the practice of the early Christian communities; and Thomas Lawson, after having evinced his sincerity in a voluntary surrender of his own benefice, conferred on the argument the weight of his erudition. (See *G. Fox's Journal*, folio edition, page 72.) The foregoing explanations seemed to arise from the various circumstances of the period under review, although its hardships have been relieved by different statutes subsequent to the Revolution of 1688, and its asperities mitigated by an auspicious increase of mutual consideration.

A. Sharp. At Dublin.

Bishop. What's your business here?

A. Sharp. My mother lives in this town; and as she is sick, and an ancient woman, I thought it my duty to come and see her.

J. Roberts. He merely came hither in good will to bear me company. If thou please, lay the more on me, and let him go free.

Bishop. No; he may be as dangerous a person as yourself, and as you came for company, you shall go for company. Send for the constable to take them into custody.

The mistress of the house understanding that the constable was to be sent for, despatched a messenger to desire him to be out of the way; but the person missing him, he came to the inn by accident; on which the landlady said, "What do you here, when honest John Roberts is going to be sent to prison? Here, come along with me." The constable being willing, she concealed him in another room; and the bishop's messenger bringing him word that he was not to be found, the bishop said to my father, "Here are many gentlemen who have a great way home, and I can send you to prison in the afternoon; so you may take your liberty till six o'clock."

My father withdrew accordingly, and his friend with him. At six o'clock he returned alone, and

found only two other persons with the bishop: Edward Barnet, a surgeon, of Culkerton, an old acquaintance of my father's; and a priest, whose name was Hall.

Bishop. So, John, you are come. 'Tis well; I want some more discourse with you.

Hall. An't please you, my lord, let me discourse him.

Bishop. Ay do, Mr. Hall; John will give you an answer.

Hall. 'Tis a great pity such men as you should have the light, sight, and knowledge of the Scriptures; for the knowledge of the Scriptures hath made you mad.

J. Roberts. Why should not I have the privilege of buying the Scriptures for my money as well as thou, or any other man? But you priests, like the Papists, would have us laymen kept in ignorance, that we might pin our faith on your sleeves. Yet, if the knowledge of the Scriptures hath made me mad, the knowledge of the sack-pot hath almost made thee mad; and if we two madmen should dispute about religion, we should make mad work of it.

Hall. An't please you, my lord, he says I am drunk.

J. Roberts. Wilt thou speak an untruth before thy lord bishop?

Hall. He did say I was drunk, my lord.

Bishop. What did you say, John?—I'll believe you.

My father having repeated his former words, the bishop, smiling, held up his hands and said, "Did you say so, John?" On which, Hall perceiving he did not incline to favour him, went away offended. The bishop then, directing his discourse to my father, said, "John, I thought you dealt hardly with me to-day, in telling me, before so many gentlemen, that I came to your house in a Judas-like manner, and betrayed you hither to send you to prison; for if I had not done what I did, people would have reported me an encourager of the Quakers.

J. Roberts. If they had, it would have been no discredit to thee.

Bishop. Come now, John, I'll burn your mittimus before your face. And now, Mr. Barnet, I have a mind to ask him some questions. John, I have heard Mr. Bull say strange things of you; that you can tell where to find anything that is missing, as well as any cunning man; but I desire to hear it from your own mouth. It was about some cows that a neighbour had lost, and could nowhere find them till he applied to you.

J. Roberts. If thou please to hear me, I'll tell thee the truth of that story.

Bishop. Pray do, I shall believe you.

J. Roberts. I had a poor neighbour, who had a wife and six children, and whom the chief of the

parish permitted to keep six or seven cows upon the waste, which were the principal support and employment of the family, and prevented them from becoming chargeable. One very stormy night, the cattle were left in the yard as usual; but could not be found in the morning. The man and his sons sought them to no purpose; and after they had been lost four days, his wife came to me, wringing her hands, and in a great deal of grief cried, "O Lord, Mr. Roberts, we are undone! My husband and I must go a-begging in our old age. We have lost all our cows. My husband and the boys have been round the country, and can hear nothing of them. I'll down on my bare knees, if you'll stand our friend." I desired she would not be in such an agony, and told her that she should not go down on her knees to me; but I would gladly help them in what I could. "I know," said she, "you are a good man, and God will hear your prayers." "I desire thee," said I, "to be still, and quiet; perhaps thy husband or sons may hear of them to-day; if not, let him provide himself with a horse, and come to me to-morrow morning, as soon as he will; and I think, if it please God, to go with him to seek them." The woman seemed transported with joy, crying, "Then we shall have our cows again." Her faith being so strong, brought the greater exercise on me, with strong

cries to the Lord, that He would be pleased to make me instrumental in His hand, for the help of the poor family. In the morning early comes the old man—"In the name of God," said he, "which way shall we go to seek them?" I, being deeply concerned in my mind, did not answer him till he had thrice repeated it, and then said, before I was aware, "We will go to Malmesbury, and in the horse-fair we shall find them." When I had spoken these words, I was troubled lest they should not prove true. On approaching the town, I inquired of the first man we met, whether he had seen any stray milch cows thereabouts. "What manner of cattle are they?" said he. And, on the poor old man describing their marks and numbers, he told us there were some such standing quietly in the horse-fair; but that, thinking they belonged to the neighbourhood, he had not taken particular notice of them. When we came to the place, the old man found them to be his; and suffered his transports of joy to rise so high, that I was quite ashamed of his carriage; for he fell a-hallooing, and threw up his montier cap in the air several times, till he had raised the neighbours out of their beds, to see what was the matter. "Oh!" said he, "I had lost my cows four or five days ago, and thought I should never see them again; but this worthy neighbour told me this morning, by his own fireside, nine

miles off, that here I should find them, and here I have them!" I desired the poor man to be quiet, and take his cows, and be thankful—as indeed I was, being reverently bowed in my spirit before the Lord, in that He was pleased to put the words of truth in my mouth. And the man drove his cattle home, to the great joy of his family.*

* The following extract from the "Contemplations" of the Lord Chief Justice Hale, so strongly illustrates the foregoing trait of benevolence, remarkable as it is, that little apology will be requisite for presenting it to the reader. It ought not, however, to be forgotten, that as the principle alluded to must be essentially clear in its evidence, as well as consistent and holy in its effects, it is thus, by its very nature, distinguished from the blind suggestions of constitutional enthusiasm. The suffrage of this eminent writer derives indeed additional weight, when we consider the strength of judgment, and steadiness of integrity, which in an age of peculiar difficulty rendered him one of the brightest ornaments of the national jurisprudence. As knight of the shire for his native county he displayed a signal instance of those great qualities, in his proposed amendment on the question for the restoration of Charles II., which must entitle his name to the veneration of every friend to religious and civil liberty. He deceased at Alderley Court, the mansion of his ancestors, in the year 1676.

The passages alluded to are as follows:—"They who truly fear God, have a secret guidance from a higher wisdom than what is merely human, namely, the spirit of truth and goodness; which does really, though secretly, prevent and direct them. Any man that sincerely and truly fears Almighty God, and calls and relies upon Him for His direction, has it as really as a son has the counsel and direction of his father; and, though the admonition be not audible, nor discernible by sense, yet it is equally as real as if a man heard a voice saying, 'This is the way, walk in it.'

Bishop. I remember another anecdote Mr. Bull told me, about a parcel of sheep a neighbour had lost, and you told him where to find them.

J. Roberts. The truth of the story is this:—A neighbour of mine, one John Curtis, at that time a

“Though the sure direction of Almighty God is principally seen in matters relating to the good of the soul; yet, even in the concerns of this life, a good man, fearing God, and begging His direction, will very often, if not at all times, find it. I can call my own experience to witness, that, in the temporal concerns of my whole life, I have never been disappointed of the best direction, when I have, in humility and sincerity, implored it.

“The observance of the secret admonitions of the Spirit of God in the heart is an effectual means to cleanse and sanctify us; and the more it is attended to, the more it will be conversant with our souls, for our instruction. In the midst of difficulties, it will be our counsellor; in the midst of temptations, it will be our strength, and grace sufficient for us; in the midst of troubles, it will be our light and our comforter.

“But it is impossible for us to enjoy the influence of the good Spirit, till we are deeply sensible of our emptiness and nothingness, and our minds are thereby brought down and laid in the dust. The spirit of Christ is, indeed, a humbling spirit; the more we have of it, the more we shall be humbled; and it is a sign that either we have it not, or that it is yet overpowered by our corruptions, if the heart be still haughty.

“Let us attend, therefore, to the secret persuasions and dissuasions of the Spirit of God, and beware of quenching or grieving it. This wind, which blows where it lists, if shut out or resisted, may never breathe upon us again, but leave us to be hardened in our sins. If observed and obeyed, it will, on all occasions, be our monitor and director. When we go out it will lead us; when we sleep it will keep us; and when we awake it will talk with us.”

domestic of George Bull's, who kept some sheep of his own, had lost them for several days; but happening to see me, and knowing that I went pretty much abroad, he requested me, if I should meet with them anywhere, to inform him of it. The next day, as I was riding to my own fields, my dogs being with me, put up a hare, and seeing they were likely to kill her, I rode up to take them off, that she might escape; when, by mere accident, I espied John Curtis's sheep in one corner of the field, in a thick briery part of the hedge, where they stood as secure as if they had been in a pound. I suppose they had been driven thither by the hounds. When I came home, I sent him word of it; and though this is no more than a common accident, I find George Bull has endeavoured to improve it to my disadvantage.

Bishop. I remember one story more he told me about a horse.

J. Roberts. If I shan't tire thy patience, I'll acquaint thee how that was. One Edward Symmonds came from London, to see his parents at Siddington. They put his horse to grass in some ground with their own, beyond a part of mine, called the Farsen Leases; through which they went with him, but when they wanted to take him from grass, he could not be found. After he had been lost some time, and they had cried him at several

market-towns, somebody, who 'tis likely might have heard the former stories related as thou hast heard them, directed this Edward Symmonds to me. On his telling me the case, I asked him which way they had taken the horse to grass? He answered, "Through the Farsen Leases." I told him, the horse being a stranger to the place, 'twas very likely he might endeavour to bend homewards, and lose himself in the Farsen Leases; for there are a great many acres belonging to me and others, under that name, which are so over-grown with large bushes, that a horse might lie concealed there for a long time. I therefore advised him to get a good many people, and search the grounds as diligently as if they were beating for a hare; which if he did, he would probably find him. The man took my advice, and found his horse. Now, where is the cunning of all this? It is no more than their own reason might have directed them to, had they properly considered the case.

Bishop. I wanted to hear these stories from your own mouth; though I neither did, nor should have credited them, in the sense Mr. Bull suggested. But I believe you, John. And now, Mr. Barnet, we'll ask John some serious questions. I can compare him to nothing but a good ring of bells. You know, Mr. Barnet, a ring of bells may be made of as good metal as can be put into bells; but they

may be out of tune. So we may say of John—he is a man of as good metal as any I ever met with, but he's quite out of tune.

J. Roberts. Thou mayst well say so, for I cannot tune after thee.

Bishop. Well, John, I remember to have read that, at the preaching of the apostle, the heart of Lydia was opened. Can you tell us what it was that opened Lydia's heart?

J. Roberts. I believe I can.

Bishop. I thought so. I desire you to do it.

J. Roberts. It was nothing but the key of David.

Bishop. Nay, now I think you are going wrong.

J. Roberts. If thou pleasest to speak, I'll hear thee; otherwise I would desire thee to hear me.

Bishop. Come, Mr. Barnet, we'll hear John.

J. Roberts. It is written, He hath the key of David, which openeth, and none can shut; and shutteth, and none can open. This is no other than the Spirit of our Lord Jesus Christ. It was the same spiritual key that opened the heart of Moses, the first penman of the Scripture, and gave him a sight of things from the beginning. It was the same that opened the hearts of all the holy patriarchs, prophets, and apostles, in ages past, who left their experience of the things of God upon record; and the same spiritual key hath, blessed be God, opened the heart of thousands in

this age, and given to them to distinguish between things that differ. And it is the same that must open thine, if ever thou comest to have it truly opened.

Bishop. It is the truth, the very truth; I never heard it so defined before. John, I have done you much wrong; I desire you to forgive me, and I'll never wrong you more.

J. Roberts. I do heartily forgive thee, as far as it is in my power; and I truly pray that the Father of mercies may forgive thee, and make thee His. As to the latter, that thou wilt never wrong me again, I am of the same mind, for it is in my heart to tell thee I shall never see thy face any more.

Bishop. I have heard that you once told the gaoler of Gloucester Castle so, and that it proved true.

J. Roberts. That gaoler had been very cruel to me and the rest of our Friends who were then prisoners. He had kept us in the prison from the sessions to the assizes, and from the assizes to the sessions, omitting to put our names in the calendar, that we might not have a hearing. At length, I acquainted the judge by letter of his illegal proceedings. In consequence of this we were registered, had a hearing, and discharged. The judge severely reproved the gaoler, saying, "Sirrah! if

ever I hear that you do the like for the future, I'll take care that you shall be gaoler no longer. Shall I come to hear and determine causes, and shall you keep men in prison during your pleasure, and not put their names in the calendar?" The gaoler, coming out of the court, was heard by the turnkey to say, "'Twas through Roberts that I was so severely reprimanded by the judge; and if ever he comes into the Castle, he shall never go out alive." On this the turnkey took an opportunity to inform me of it, and added, "I would not have you by any means come back to the Castle to-night, to fetch any of your things; for if you do, he'll certainly detain you for his fees. I'll take the same care of them as if you yourself were present to do it." I acknowledged his kindness, and went home. When the gaoler returned to the Castle, he asked the turnkey where the Quakers were. He answered, that he thought it his business to take care of the felons, and left the Quakers to him. Not long after, being constable, I secured a felon who had broken out of the Castle, and sent the turnkey notice of it. He coming over to fetch him back, begged, if by any means I could prevent it, that I would never come there again whilst his master was gaoler, "For," says he, "if you do, he swears you shall never go out alive; and that hour you come in I'll leave the Castle, for I can't

stay to see you abused." "Does he still say so?" said I. "Yes, he does," replied the turnkey. "Then remember me to him," said I, "and tell him from me that I shall never see his face any more." Soon after it pleased God to take him away by death, and in a little time I was sent a prisoner there again.

This was the last conference my father had with the bishop; they parted in much love, and the latter shortly deceased.*

* The preceding seems to demand a tribute of respect to the memory of this amiable prelate, who deceased at his episcopal residence in the year 1671-2. He is represented by Wood "to have been a man of great erudition, prudent, modest, and of a temperate mind."

In Bishop Heber's "Life and whole Works of Jeremy Taylor," vol. i., page 313, is the following Note K, respecting Bishop Nicholson:—

"William Nicholson was the son of Christopher Nicholson, a rich clothier, of Stratford, near Hadleigh, Suffolk. He was brought up as a chorister, at Magdalen College, Oxford, where he was afterwards Bible clerk, and eventually became tutor to the Lord Percy, and chaplain to his father, the Earl of Northumberland. In 1616 he was elected master of the Free-school at Croydon, where his discipline and powers of instruction were much celebrated. He resigned this situation in 1629, when he obtained the rectory of Llandilo Vawr, in Caermarthenshire, to which were afterwards added the dignities of residentiary of St. David's and archdeacon of Brecknock.

"In 1643 he was named as one of the Assembly of Divines at Westminster, probably by the interest of the Earl of Northumberland, but he never took his place amongst them;

“I confess, indeed, that there was a priesthood under whom tithe was due, whereby those who brought not the full tithe into the storehouse were said to rob God, who had appointed it for the priest, the widow, the fatherless, and the stranger; but that priesthood is changed, as saith the author of the Epistle to the Hebrews, since the Lord Jesus Christ is come, who is the everlasting high priest of our profession. He hath chosen and sent forth His ministers freely, as freely they have received. Therefore we can no longer give our money for that which is not bread, nor our labour for that which will not satisfy; for I can truly say, in the fear of God, that I was long seeking the living among the dead, going from one form of religion to another, without ever finding a real peace or rest to my soul. But now, when I can say to His praise that I have found Him whom my soul loveth, I am made willing in obedience to Him to bear the reproaches of men, and to suffer joyfully the spoiling of my goods; for I must deny Christ, the second priesthood, to be come in the flesh, if I should pay the tithe which appertained to the first.

“Now, friend, it having been much upon me to clear my conscience thus to thee in the sight of God, I shall, I hope, rest satisfied in His will, if it please Him to permit thee to try me further. I

have been twice thy prisoner ; the first time I was providentially delivered by one who gave thee what thou requiredst, saying the thing was of the Lord, although she had before no acquaintance with me ; the second time thou wast suffered to make a grievous spoil of my goods, in which thy bailiffs took from me, as near as I can judge, more than thirty times the lawful amount.

“ Thus having written these few lines for the purpose aforesaid, I would entreat thee in patience and moderation to weigh and consider them ; and I shall commit my cause to the Lord my God, who alone is able to judge the truth of the matter, and before whom we both must give an account. And so, for the present, I rest thy friend,

“ JOHN ROBERTS.”*

* George Bull was descended of an ancient family at Shapwick, in Somersetshire, and born at Wells, in that county, in 1634. Having finished his classical learning at Wells and Tiverton, he was entered a commoner at Exeter College, Oxford, in 1648.

In 1649, refusing to take the oath to the Commonwealth of England, he retired to North Cadbury, in Somersetshire. After the Restoration, in 1662, he was presented by the Earl of Clarendon to the rectory of Siddington St. Peter, near Cirencester, having previously been instituted to the adjoining rectory of Siddington St. Mary, by Lady Pool, in 1658. In this situation he remained twenty-seven years, discharging his pastoral functions with assiduity, and prosecuting his studies with indefatigable application.

Most of his voluminous works were composed during this

Some time after this interview, our Friends having been long kept out of their meeting-house at Cirencester, and continuing to meet in the street, orders were one day given to permit them to assemble in the house, which they did. While Theophila Townsend was in prayer, the bishop, successor to Bishop Nicholson, Sir John Guise, William Bouchier, of Barnsley, justice of peace, and a great company of attendants, came in. The bishop laid his hand on Theophila's head, saying, "Enough, good woman, enough; desist." When she had done, Richard Bowley prayed also; after which Sir John Guise asked his name.

R. Bowley. Richard Bowley.

Sir J. Guise. Where do you live?

R. Bowley. In this town.

Sir J. Guise. What trade are you?

R. Bowley. A maltster.

period of his life, and many of them were written in Latin. In 1685 he was presented to the valuable rectory of Avening, in Gloucestershire, and soon after was promoted by Archbishop Sancroft to the archdeaconry of Llandaff, and in 1705 made Bishop of St. David's. He died in 1709.

He was a man of extensive learning, and his published works are numerous, and have been several times reprinted. It appears by the above letter, that he had made some moderate proposition to John Roberts respecting the tithes, and there is no account of his having afterwards caused him to be imprisoned.

Sir J. Guise. Set him down twenty pounds for preaching. Whose house is this?

J. Roberts. This house has many owners.

Sir J. Guise. But who is the landlord?

J. Roberts. One who is able to give us a quiet possession of it.

Sir J. Guise. I demand of you who the landlord is?

J. Roberts. The king is our landlord.

Sir J. Guise. How is the king your landlord?

J. Roberts. It is the king's land, and we pay the king's auditors. And as we are not only his peaceable subjects, but also his good tenants who pay him his rent, we have reason to hope that he will give us a peaceable possession.

Sir J. Guise. Who pays the king's auditors?

B. Bowley. I do.

Sir J. Guise. Set him down twenty pounds for the house.

J. Roberts (speaking to the other justices). Who is so forward to take names and levy fines?

Justice Bouchier. Don't you know him? 'Tis Sir J. Guise.

Sir J. Guise. What's that to you? What's your name?

J. Roberts. I am not ashamed of my name. But if thy name be Guise, I knew thy father by a very

remarkable incident; and I would have thee take warning—*a word to the wise is sufficient.*

Sir J. Guise. There, constable, take this fellow, and lay him by the heels; he affronts me.

J. Roberts. I am not afraid of being laid by the heels. (The constable not being forward to obey, he took my father by one arm, and told him to take the other. They led him into the street, and bid him go about his business; my father answered, "I am about my business," and on their going in again, he followed them.)

Sir J. Guise. I command you, in the king's name, to go out again.

J. Roberts. If thou please to go out first, I'll follow.

With some pains he got all the Friends out of the house, and ordered the forms to be brought into the street. On this, my father said, "The seats are our own, and we may as well sit as stand." So the Friends sat down; but presently after they were broken up again, and the seats forfeited. Not long after, John Timbrel, a Friend of Cirencester, wrote to Justice Bouchier, with whom he had some acquaintance, telling him, amongst other things, that he had till then a better opinion of him than to think he would set his hand to such a work; and that he was sorry he should be one in it. Sir John being acquainted with this by the justice,

issued a special warrant against J. Timbrel. The constable was so civil as to inform him of it, and told him that he would not serve it on him till the market was over. However, he left his market, came to my father, and telling him of the warrant, asked his advice. My father advised him not to stay for the serving of it, but to go directly to Sir John. He expressed his readiness to do so, provided my father would give him his company. On their arrival he said, "I heard thou hast issued a warrant to bring me before thee; but I chose rather to come without it."

Sir John. What's your name?

J. Timbrel. John Timbrel.

Sir John. Are you that saucy, pragmatic fellow that wrote to Mr. Bouchier, to deter him from executing the king's laws?

J. Timbrel. I did write a letter to William Bouchier.

Sir John. Then you deserve a stone-doublet.

J. Timbrel. Hast thou seen the letter?

Sir John. No; but I have an account of it.

J. Roberts. Then, though thou art a young man, I would desire thee to show thyself so much a wise one, as not to condemn anything which thou hast not seen. I have seen a copy, and think there is a great deal of good advice in it; and I wish both thou and William Bouchier were so wise as to take it.

Sir John. I thought you had been the writer, or inditer of it, though Timbrel's name was to it.

J. Roberts. No, I was not. I knew nothing of it till after it was sent.

Sir John. But I remember you affronted me the other day, before a great number of people, concerning my father. Pray, what did you know of my father?

John Roberts. Some time ago, several of our Friends being met in a peaceable manner to worship God, at Stoke Orchard, thy father came in with a file of musqueteers at his heels, and beat and abused us very much. I took occasion to warn him in abundance of love, though he did not seem to regard it, but sent above twelve of us to Gloucester Castle. I then told him God would plead our cause with him. And I was credibly informed that, not on the same night, but the next after, he went to bed as well in appearance as usual; but in the morning, not ringing a certain bell at the time he used to do, his housekeeper went up repeatedly, and thought that he was asleep; till, at length, suspecting something more than ordinary, she made a closer inspection, and perceiving his countenance changed, threw aside the curtain in a great surprise. On this, he just flashed open his eyes, but said not a word. She asked him how he did; but he made no answer, which caused her to cry more earnestly,

"Pray, sir, how do you do? How is it with you? For God's sake tell me!" When all he said to her was, "Oh, these Quakers! Oh, these Quakers! Would to God I had never had a hand against these Quakers!" I did not hear that he ever spoke more.

Sir John seemed surprised at this relation, and did not contradict it in the least; which it is reasonable to think he would have done, and that with resentment, had it been otherwise. Yet notwithstanding this warning, he continued his practice of granting warrants against us. "The constables however, being unwilling to execute them, would send a person beforehand to fasten the doors and windows; and on Sir John's coming to Cirencester, and inquiring of them whether anything had been done, they replied that they had repeatedly found our houses secured. He told them in answer, that if that was all, they should fix a day, and he would send his men to assist them. They, still desirous of eluding the business, said, that if he pleased to do so, they would endeavour to keep the peace." Presently after this conversation, Sir Robert Atkins arrived, when they both withdrew from the inn, to Perrot's-brook, about two miles from Cirencester, where they sat down to play. A quarrel arising, Sir John drew his sword, and demanded satisfaction, but the people of the house stepped in between them, and parted them. They, seeming to be

pacified, sat down to play again ; till, afterwards, as they walked in the bowling-green, the breast of Sir John being still filled with resentment, he said, "Sir Robert, you gave me the lie, and I will have satisfaction."

Sir Robert. If I have said anything more than is common for gentlemen to say to each other in their play, betwixt you and I, I ask your pardon.

Sir John. If you'll go in, and ask it before the people of the house, I'll put it up ; otherwise I will not.

Sir Robert. No, Sir John, that's beneath me.

Sir John. Then draw, or you shall die.

On this, they both drew their swords ; and Sir Robert, giving him a gentle prick in the arm, said, "I desire you, Sir John, to take that for satisfaction ; I could have had you elsewhere, but was unwilling to do you further mischief."

Sir John. I'll kill, or be killed.

Sir Robert. If that be your mind, look to yourself as well as you can ; for I shall have you at the next pass.

And so he had ; for he ran him through the body ; on which he fell. Sir Robert stepped up to him, gently drew out his sword, and taking his handkerchief rolled up the corner, and thrust it into the orifice ; after which, he lifted him up, and desired him, while he was able, that he would

acquaint the people of the house, that his death was of his own seeking. When they were come about him, he was so generous as to say, "If I die, Sir Robert is clear; for had he not killed me, I would have killed him."

Sir Robert procured him surgeons; and presently, great pains seizing him, he lamented much, saying, "It is the just hand of God upon me for meddling with the Quakers; but if He will be pleased to spare me, and try me again, I'll never more act against them. For Roberts told me, that if I went on persecuting, the hand which overtook my father would overtake me before I was aware. He further said, that I was set on by some envious priests, and might have to repent it, as I now do with all my heart. And it is very true that I could never be in the company of Mr. Careless, or Mr. Freame, but they would be stirring me up to put the law in execution against Dissenters."

The sword having missed his vitals, he recovered, stood candidate for the county afterwards, and never more disturbed our meetings.

The course of the narrative leads me next to mention some particulars of a prosecution, commenced by Justice James George, against my father, my brother Nathaniel, and myself. He had lately canvassed for the borough of Cirencester, and was so much offended at some of the Friends

having opposed his interest, that he threatened revenge the first opportunity; and, although none of the family had voted on either side, he sent one morning for my brother and me, who lived in the town, to meet him at the Ram Inn. It being market-day, my father came in soon afterwards, when we informed him of the circumstance, and desired his company. On our arrival, the justice, addressing himself to him, said, "'Tis very well that you are come too; I sent for your sons to inform them, that it is his majesty's pleasure to have the laws put in execution; and I now take this opportunity to let you and them know that we must all be of one church."

J. Roberts. Thou oughtest, then, to be well assured that it is the *right church*. For if thou shouldst be permitted so far to exercise the authority thou art entrusted with, as to force a man, against his conscience, to conform to a wrong church, thou canst not indemnify that man for so conforming, in the day of account.

The window of the room being open, we had a prospect of Cirencester Tower; and the justice, pointing to it said, "What do you call that?"

J. Roberts. Thou mayst call it a daw-house, if thou please. Dost thou see how the daws are flocking about it?

Justice. Well, notwithstanding your jesting, I

warn you, in the king's name, that you meet no more, as you'll answer it at your peril.

J. Roberts. Then I suppose thou think'st thou hast done thy duty.

Justice. Yes.

J. Roberts. Then I desire thee to give me leave to do mine. And I do now warn thee, in the name of the King of kings, and Lord of lords, not to molest or hinder us in the peaceable exercise of *our duty to God*, as thou wilt answer for it another day.

A short time after this, he bid the officers go to the Quakers' meeting-house, on Sunday next, and bring their names to him. They were very unwilling to obey; and some of them acquainted me with their orders, desiring that we would either meet at a different hour, or in some other place. I told them we did not dare so far to deny our duty; "For," said I, "we worship the same God that Daniel did; and he, notwithstanding the severe decree of the king, failed not openly to acknowledge Him, by praying with his window open as usual. Our God is as able now to stop the mouth of the lion, as He was then; and we are not afraid to trust in Him, after our experience of the many deliverances He has wrought for us.*"

* Anno 1682.—At a meeting at Cirencester, James George, a justice of the peace, and others, put Thomas Loveday out of

The next first-day, we met at the usual time and place, and had a good meeting, the love and presence of God being sensibly felt amongst us. One of the constables came in, and delivered a warrant to my brother John, desiring him to read it. My brother put it into his pocket, telling him he designed to do so when the meeting was over. "That will not do," said he, "for if you will not read it now, I desire you to give it me again," which he did. Then they took a list of several of our names, including my father's, and carried it in to Justice George; on which he issued his warrant to distrain our goods. They seized my father's corn in his barns, and locked up the doors. About which time the murrain infected the justice's cattle, and they died apace. His steward told him he must send for my father, or he would lose them all. "No," said the justice, "don't speak to him now, because I have warrants against him and his sons. Employ somebody else." So the steward sent for another, who did what he could for them, but to very little purpose; for they still continued to sicken and die as before. The steward then told him, "Please your worship, I believe you will lose the meeting; after which, Richard Bowley prayed, and the justice fined him £20; half of which he laid on Loveday, though not then in the meeting, and the constables seized his goods to the value of £16 14s.—See *Besse's Sufferings of Friends*, folio edition, vol. i., page 223.

all your cattle. I don't find they are getting any better." "Send for Roberts, then," said the justice, "but don't ask him in as you used to do; and when he has done, settle with him." My father went, having learnt the great Christian lesson of returning his enemies good for evil, and his exertions saved the remainder. As he was wiping his hands in the entry, the justice undesignedly came by him, and, seeing he could not avoid his notice, said, "So, you have done something for my cattle, I suppose." "Yes," said my father, "and I hope it will do them good." "Well," said the justice to the steward, "settle it."

J. Roberts. No; I'll have none of thy money.

Justice. None of my money! why so?

J. Roberts. To what purpose is it for me to take a little of thy money by *retail*, whilst thou art seizing my goods by *wholesale*.

Justice. Don't you think that your coming to give directions about my cattle, shall deter me from executing the king's laws.

J. Roberts. It is time enough for thee to *deny* me a favour when I ask it of thee. I seek none at thy hands. But, after thou hast done me all the displeasure thou art permitted, I will notwithstanding serve thee or thine to the utmost of my ability.

Justice. Well, you must stay and dine with me.

J. Roberts. Perhaps I shall intrude if I stay. I had rather be excused.

Justice. 'Tis no intrusion ; you shall stay.

So my father stayed, and presented him with a piece of Thomas Ellwood's against persecution. This, together with his readiness to serve him, so wrought upon the justice, that no corn, as far as I can remember, was then carried off. But, shortly after, my father called and informed us, that as he crossed the market-place, he observed several magistrates at the King's Head, whom he apprehended to have met with an intention of falling on us, adding, with tears in his eyes, "May the Lord keep you faithful in your testimony for Him ; but it is as hard for me to part from you, as it is for a partridge to leave her young." Presently, some of our neighbours under the same expectation secured the door and windows, and carried away the key. The magistrates then stationed one man at the front, and two at the back of the premises, with a charge to let none escape, and arriving shortly in person, summoned us with threats to open the door. I replied, that I had not fastened it, neither could I open it, if I would. On this they dismissed the constables to procure gunpowder ; but, as the latter took care to inform the tradesmen of the purpose for which it was intended, none would supply them. They were next despatched for a

sledge and bar, which a neighbouring smith also refused to furnish, declaring, " You shall have no such thing here ; I would go myself with it to render them any service, but you shall get nothing from me to do them harm." At length they procured the instrument from a shop where the master was absent, with which they were commanded to force the door. Looking out of an upper window, and seeing the sheriff of the county with his officers, Sir Thomas Cutler, and other magistrates, the two constables, and the gaolers of Gloucester Castle, before the house, I went down and said to my brother that we must now resign our all. In a short time the door gave way, and the whole party entered, preceded by Sir Thomas Cutler with his hand on his sword. A young woman, who was near the entry, ran out in a fright ; seeing which, he exclaimed, " There's one gone—there might as well be five hundred gone ! I'll take my oath there was a conventicle." I desired him to be careful of what he said or swore, since he must give an account, and he knew not how soon. A servant belonging to one of them took off my hat, and laid it on the table. I took it, and put it on again, saying, " I hope a man may keep his hat on in his own house, without offence to any."

Sir Thomas. What's your name ?

D. Roberts. Daniel Roberts.

Sir Thomas. Can you swear ?

D. Roberts. Not that I know of ; I never tried.

Sir Thomas. Then you must begin now.

D. Roberts. I think I shall not.

Sir Thomas. How will you help it ?

D. Roberts. By not doing it. Unless thou canst convince me by the book in thy hand (which was a Bible) that it is lawful. For when men come and say, " You must swear, or suffer," it is but reasonable to expect, for the satisfaction of scrupulous consciences, that such should be qualified to prove its lawfulness. Our Saviour says, " Swear not at all." Thou sayest, I must swear. Pray, which am I to obey ?

Sir Thomas. Well, Daniel, if you will not swear, you must go to gaol.

D. Roberts. The will of God be done ; for be it known to you, we had rather be in prison, and enjoy our peace with God, than at liberty, and break our peace with Him.

Justice Parsons. I suppose you are one of John Roberts's sons ?

D. Roberts. Yes.

Justice Parsons. I am sorry for that.

D. Roberts. Why art thou sorry for that ? I never heard an honest man speak against my father in my life. What hast thou against him ?

Sir Thomas. We have this against him, that he

is not only misled himself, but is also the means of misleading many.

D. Roberts. If you have nothing against him but his obedience to the law of his God, that is no more than the accusers formerly had against honest Daniel, and does not concern me.

Sir Thomas. His worshipping God in the way he does is crime enough.

D. Roberts. Then I hope I shall be a criminal as long as I live.

The magistrates now retired, directing the officers to bring us over to the King's Head, as soon as they had seized goods sufficient to satisfy the penalty; which, for ourselves and some unable persons present at the meeting, Justice George fixed at seventy pounds. Having in the mean time withdrawn from the company, I besought the Lord that He would be pleased to strengthen us in this day of trial; and, blessed be His name, He condescended to fill our hearts with His goodness, and to carry us far above the fear of our enemies with a consoling evidence of His living presence and approbation.

On our entering the inn, Justice George addressed us as follows:—"I forewarned you of all this, some time ago, as the consequence of your continuing to frequent your meetings: it is now come upon you, and I cannot help it." We

.

answered, that the will of God, in the secret of our own consciences, required us so to worship Him, though human laws commanded otherwise ; that if, in obedience to them, He should suffer our faith and patience to be tried by unreasonable men, He was able to deliver us when He pleased ; but that, on the contrary, should the fear of such induce us to disobey and offend Him, it would be out of the power of any to save us from His displeasure. Sir Thomas Cutler then demanded of the officers why they had not brought us sooner ; to which they answered, that the delay was occasioned by our requesting leave to take some account of the goods they seized. " They take an account !" exclaimed Sir Thomas ; " there was no need of that ; you ought to seize the whole of it, more or less ; and if any one bids you a groat for five hundred pounds' worth of their effects, you should take it." On this I reminded him of the golden rule, by which all Christians were commanded " to do to others as they would they should do unto them." " I have already," he continued, " tendered the oath,* but, in consideration of your youth,

* When, not satisfied with excessive fines, the magistrates were bent on proceeding to an imprisonment, they had only to offer the Oath of Allegiance, which, from the conscientious scruples entertained by the sufferers, they knew would afford them a ready pretext, besides empowering them to inflict the ulterior severities of a premunire.

I will offer it you again; and if either, or both of you will take it, you may return to your house and trade: if not, we shall make your mittimus, and send you to Gloucester Castle. After which, we have the power of giving you a third tender; and should you persist in refusing that, all your goods and chattels will then be forfeited to the king, and your persons transported to Nevis or Antigua, or any other of the foreign plantations to which his majesty may be pleased to send you." To this we answered, "that our God was the same by sea as He was by land; and that whilst He continued to favour us with His comfortable presence, we were not anxious as to what they might be permitted to do with us."

Our mittimus was next made, and we were delivered to the custody of the officers, one of whom, Nicholas Merchant, a constable, being appointed to conduct us to prison, asked when we could conveniently attend him. We replied, that as the day was far spent, we could not easily go that evening, but that we hoped to be in readiness the next morning. He assented, and we passed the greater part of the following night in arranging our concerns, and in settling, by letter, with our tradesmen.

When the morning arrived, the officer would have given us the mittimus, telling us we could

take it, and go to prison by ourselves. This we declined, considering it improper. He then asked me whether I would ride my own horse? I answered, not at that time, and on that occasion, but that if he had provided us, we were prepared to go. Before we set out, we shook hands with many of our neighbours, who had kindly come to bid us farewell; and calling at Amariah Drewett's,* where we found our dear parents, brother, and as many friends of the town as could conveniently assemble, they walked with us to the town's end, the officer leading our horses. Having here taken a solemn leave, we proceeded to the prison with our attendant, who regretted his hard lot in being

* This respectable Friend, who is described by one of his contemporaries as "a preacher of righteousness in life and conversation," had also to experience a share of sufferings during the persecutions above recorded. Besides imprisonment in the county gaol, his goods were distrained so heavily, that the house is said to have been at length completely stripped of its moveables. He died in 1687, after having sustained the inflictions of this barbarous period with exemplary mildness and resignation. Previous to one distraint, Justice George and his brother had been passing the premises, but overhearing a person engaged in prayer, they disturbed the family in pursuit of what they termed a conventicle. A graduate of Oxford, well acquainted with Amariah Drewett, at the same time entered the street, and was summoned by the justice to come in and see the king's peace kept. On this he angrily answered that he knew nobody there who would break it, "unless," added he, "you do, or those you bring with you."

obliged to convey us there, and offered to serve us in any way he could. On this my brother requested that he would defer the execution of the warrant till the next morning, as we wished to discharge some accounts in the city, and to provide ourselves with bedding and other requisites. He replied, that his own business prevented him from staying all night, but that he would deliver us and the mittimus to an innkeeper, his nephew, who could go with us when we pleased.

On our arrival at the prison, John Langbourn, the gaoler, knowing we came from Cirencester, refused to receive us except from an officer of that place. On this the innkeeper exclaimed, "Here, take the mittimus, and God in heaven bless you, but I believe my uncle must come down in your stead." I again tendered it to the gaoler, informing him of the circumstances, and expressing our unwillingness that the constable should suffer for the kindness he had shown us. To this he at length answered:—"Well, then, if you desire it, I will receive it from you, though not from him."

Having entered the gaol, we found several of our friends prisoners there before us, from various parts of the county, and, with those who were committed afterwards, we at last became a family of forty or fifty. The Castle was very full, and the

gaoler being engaged to attend the assizes at Oxford, was much embarrassed from the difficulty of leaving. He acquainted me with his uneasiness, and asked me whether I would oblige him by undertaking the superintendence, at the same time offering me, in addition to his acknowledgment, a handsome remuneration. I refused the latter, but expressed my readiness to assist him, although, as it was an affair of considerable moment, I wished a little time to consider it. Having consulted the Friends who were our fellow-prisoners, my brother being then absent, they advised me to gratify him, which I accordingly did. The gaol, besides a number of felons, and from fifteen hundred to two thousand debtors, had just received two notorious robbers, who had broken from several other prisons. A conspiracy for the same purpose was discovered and prevented during the gaoler's absence, and in consequence of the services thus gratuitously afforded him, our friends experienced considerable indulgence, and I could frequently obtain permission for individuals, on any urgent occasion, to revisit their families.

As we were thus a numerous party, we had often large meetings, on both first and week-days, in the Castle, when many of the other prisoners, in addition to the town's people, would come and sit with us. Our persecutors being incensed at this, one

of them, Richard Parsons, who was then chancellor of the diocese, as well as a priest and magistrate, determined on a first-day morning to interrupt the assembly. It so happened, that our dear father had come that very day to visit us; and putting up his horse at his usual inn, which was then kept by the mayor of the city, his wife sent to inform him of their intention, and to recommend his absenting himself, lest he should be detained a prisoner. We acknowledged his friendship, but nevertheless attended the meeting, and after it had been some time assembled, Richard Parsons entered, with several other persons. An ancient friend, Henry Panton, who had formerly been a fencing master, was preaching as they came in, concerning the confession of some, who perpetually say they are doing what they ought not, and leaving undone what they ought to do. These words the justice took hold of, telling him that he was complaining of others, for what he was doing himself. "For," said he, "you are now doing what you ought not, and leaving undone what you ought to do;" at the same time catching hold of his gray locks to push him down. But Henry being a tall man, and pretty strong and active, although in years, stood his ground, and spoke over his head. Parsons then strove to stop his mouth; but he avoided it, by turning his head

aside. When he had done speaking, Theophila Townsend stood up, and said, "'Tis a sign the devil's hard put to it to have his drudgery done, that priests must leave their pulpits and parishioners, to take up the business of informers against poor prisoners in the prison." After Justice Parsons had been some time endeavouring to get the names of some present, and nobody would give him information, he exclaimed, "I see plainly how matters go; 'tis no wonder here are such meetings; but if you are thereabouts, I shall be even with you another way." He had a list at home of several of the prisoners' names, and taking it for granted that they were all present at the time, issued his warrants for distraining their goods. In this, however, he was mistaken, for several had their leave of absence; amongst whom was Lettice Gush, a widow, who lived about twenty miles off. Some officers were sent to her house to seize her goods on this accusation, but she told them she was not at the meeting, and persuaded them to go with her to her landlord, who was also a justice of the peace, and knew what she said to be true. When they came before him, and showed him the warrant, "What a rascal!" he exclaimed, "is this Parsons! Here he says he'll take his oath that my tenant was convicted by him of being at a conventicle in Gloucester Castle, such a day of

the month ; and I'll take mine that she was then at home, which is twenty miles off. If you touch any of her goods by virtue of this warrant, be it at your peril. I assure you, if you do, I'll stick close to your skirts."

Officer. What can we do in this case ? How can we make a legal return of the warrant without executing it ?

Landlord. Carry it back to Mr. Parsons ; tell him to do as he pleases, and I'll bear you out in it.

So they returned without giving her any further trouble. A similar warrant was issued against Francis Boy, a physician, who was likewise absent at the time of the pretended conviction. When the officers arrived he was not at home, and his cattle were taken away, to the value of between twenty and thirty pounds. He afterwards recollected that on the day specified in the warrant he had been attending a gentleman, to whom he went, and inquired if he could remember the time ? The gentleman answered he had good reason to do so. "For," said he, "if you had not done what you did for me that day, I believe I should now have been in my grave." He then informed him of the circumstance which occasioned his giving him the trouble. "Well," replied he, "I advise you to appeal at the next quarter sessions for redress ; and you may assure yourself that I'll

endeavour to serve you as far as lies in my power; for I'll take my oath, before any judge or bench of justices in England, that you were with me that day." But it soon took air that he had such a substantial evidence in his favour, and his cattle were returned before the sessions.

In the third year of our imprisonment, it pleased God to visit our dear father with sickness, which proved mortal. I had leave to attend him the major part of the time, and the Lord vouchsafed to favour him with His living presence in his last moments; when, having honourably finished his day's work, he departed this life in the year 1683, and was interred in the piece of ground he had long before given to the Friends for a burying place, at the lower end of his orchard.*

* His excellent widow, respecting whom some memorials have been transmitted to us, deceased, at an advanced age, in the year 1698. She survived to witness a prosperous issue to those eventful vicissitudes of which both the families had participated, and under whose various trials her own conduct had manifested an amiable assemblage of the most interesting private and social virtues. Fortitude and tenderness, regulated by the dictates of a genuine and consistent piety, marked her character; and she seems to have inherited a mind worthy of the martyred ancestor, who has been styled the "glory and reproach of his country." To his instrumentality, England is chiefly indebted for the Protestant Reformation, whilst his many virtues have shed on the family name a lustre, in which the proudest associations of domestic and Continental nobility, and even those of imperial greatness, are comparatively forgotten.

Some days after the interment, I was informed that my brother and myself, with four Friends more, had been discharged by the judge, but that the latter were detained for the fees which, for conscience' sake, we declined to pay. I therefore went down to use my interest with the gaoler for their release, and found him ill in bed; he told me that he was very willing to remit the fees belonging to himself, but that there were some due to the under-sheriff, which were not in his power.

Justice George, however, becoming at length sensible, as he confessed to the gaoler, of the severity with which he had treated the Friends, and being censured by many of his own acquaintance, on account of our hard usage, determined at the next sessions to discharge the amount himself. We were all accordingly liberated, and I came out, and settled at my present habitation at Chesham, in Buckinghamshire, where I have now dwelt about forty years.

Thus, considering it desirable that these singular providences should not be forgotten, I was inclined to commit them to writing for the perusal of my own family, and a few particular friends. In relating the different conferences, I have been careful to retain the original words, as nearly as I could remember, or, at least, to express the general sense and purport. Should the narrative tend to the

confirmation and encouragement of any in a course of true Christian piety, my design will be fully answered.

DANIEL ROBERTS.

CHESHAM,

Fourth Month, 1725.

TESTIMONY

Of Upper-Side Monthly Meeting, &c., respecting DANIEL ROBERTS, deceased, 1726-7.

“OUR dear and worthy friend, Daniel Roberts, was born at Siddington, near Cirencester, in the county of Gloucester, in the year 1658, and was educated in the way of truth from his infancy. He was early called to the ministry, and by his fervent labours in the work thereof, and constant and patient sufferings by spoil of goods and imprisonment in Gloucester Castle for the blessed truth, in the reign of King Charles the Second, was made instrumental, in the hands of God, for the conversion and strengthening of many in those parts. Soon after he was discharged from his imprisonment, in the year 1684, he came and settled at Chesham, in the county of Bucks, where he

lived about forty-two years. During this time, he made it his chief concern to promote the cause of truth by an exemplary life, as well as by verbal testimony; in which steady Christian course he approved himself a faithful member of the church of Christ. We steadfastly believe he lived in the fear and departed in the favour of God; and that it may truly be said concerning him, that there died a servant of the Lord. His infirmities of body were such as to render him incapable of performing his usual services in the ministry for above twelve months before his decease."

The foregoing testimony concerning my dear deceased father, Daniel Roberts, being chiefly a memorial of his Christian services during his residence at Chesham, I was willing to add, that there are divers still living in Cirencester aforesaid, and parts adjacent, who can set to their seals, that by his fervent labours and constant and patient sufferings, he was rendered thus instrumental for their conversion and encouragement. I may further observe (from my own experience), that ever since I was capable of recollection, his whole life has been one continued series of practical conformity to the precepts of Christianity. He, by a steady application of his mind to the dictates of Divine grace, became a good proficient in the

school of Christ, and was to us—his children—a pattern of humility, love, patience, self-denial, and those other Christian virtues which are the necessary qualifications of a disciple,—ready on all occasions to succour the distressed in body or mind.

AXTELL ROBERTS.

APPENDIX.

Since the foregoing was printed the Editor has received the following additional Testimony respecting DANIEL ROBERTS, copied from the original Records of the Monthly Meeting of Friends for the County of Bucks, held at Aylesbury, the 1st day of the 2nd Month, 1728.

The friends appointed in the 5th Month past, to prepare a Testimony concerning our dear deceased friend, DANIEL ROBERTS, did now deliver it, which being read, was approved and signed in behalf of the meeting: and is as followeth, viz:—

“As to the first labours of our dear deceased friend, and settlement in these parts, most of our ancient friends, who had knowledge thereof, being removed, we have not much to communicate; but his later services in the church, and exemplary conversation for many years amongst us, remain a memorial on our minds, and engage us to give forth this brief testimony concerning him.

He was one, whom in his early age (as we have heard from himself) the Lord was graciously pleased

to call into his vineyard, and committed unto him a dispensation of the everlasting gospel: by his faithful testimony thereunto, he was often made an instrument of edification and comfort to the churches of Christ, also of instruction and information to those of other professions.

It was his care and concern that the discipline of truth might be maintained, he diligently attended meetings for that service, was of a meek and peaceable spirit, and earnestly sought the peace and unity of the brotherhood, being often opened in tender advice and counsel to the weak, yet steady in zeal against every appearance of evil: in his family he was a loving husband, a tender father, and kind master; to his neighbours he was courteous and kind, and has left a good report. His labour and service in the church, adorned with humility and temperance, his honest and innocent conversation in the world, gives us an honorable esteem of him.

The loss of our worthy friends, who have been made serviceable in their day, is cause of sorrow to the church, yet being sensible the benefit we receive by their services are from the hand of our heavenly Father, from whence all our mercies proceed, we sincerely desire we may be kept in an humble sense thereof, that in all things we are called unto, we may yield faithful obedience, and truly regard the honor of his holy name. And as it has pleased the Almighty, who both qualified this our dear

friend for his service, and supported him therein, now to remove him, we desire to be resigned to his blessed will.

The knowledge we had of our deceased friend, and also the sweet and peaceable frame of mind some of us with great comfort beheld in him, in a visit, a few days before his end, gives us good cause to believe he died in peace with the Lord, and is entered into his everlasting rest. He departed this life at Chesham, in the County of Bucks, (the place of his abode,) the 16th of 12th Month, 1726; and was decently interred in Friends' Burying Ground there, y^e 19th following."

Signed in and on behalf of our Monthly Meeting, holden at Aylesbury, in the said County of Bucks, this the 1st day of 2nd Mouth, 1728.

NICHOLAS LARCUM,
JOSEPH ROSE,
AXTEL ROBERTS,
JOHN LOVEDAY,
ABRAHAM BARBER,
JOSEPH LOVELACE,
THOMAS OLLIFFE.

179



C 8347.489.17

Some memoirs of the life of John Ro

Widener Library

003526232



3 2044 081 823 569